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**Scaffolding the construction of teaching knowledge
in a pre-service teacher training context:
Language Teacher education in a Turkish University**

Marion Engin

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Education
Department of Education
University of Bath
June 2010

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Marion Engin

Date:

_____ 16th January 2011 _____

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Table of contents

Acknowledgements	3
Abbreviations	8
Abstract	9
<u>Chapter 1: Introduction</u>	
1.1 Introduction	10
1.2 My personal position	12
1.3 Institutional and national context	14
1.4 My contribution to the field of language teacher training	15
1.5 Overview of the chapters	15
<u>Chapter 2: Literature review</u>	
2.1 Introduction	17
2.2 Socio-cultural theory: the main tenets	17
2.2.1 Situated learning	18
2.2.2 Mediation	19
2.2.3 Scaffolding	20
2.2.4 The zone of proximal development	22
2.3 Language and talk	23
2.3.1 The role of talk in learning	24
2.3.2 The role of questions in teacher talk	26
2.4 Discourses	28
2.4.1 Teacher training: a blue-print approach	29
2.4.2 Discourses and power in the training context	30
2.5 Second language teacher education	32
2.5.1 A brief overview of SLTE approaches	33
2.5.2 SLTE in a socio-cultural framework	34
2.5.3 Teacher training contexts	35
2.5.4 Second language context	36
2.6 Knowledge as a construct	37
2.6.1 Types of knowledge	37
2.6.2 Teacher cognition	38

2.6.3	Role of reflection in constructing knowledge	39
2.7	Conclusion to Chapter 2 and research questions	41

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1	Introduction	42
3.2	A qualitative research paradigm	43
3.2.1	Criticisms of qualitative research	44
3.2.2	Practitioner research	45
3.2.3	Case study	45
3.3	Research procedures	46
3.3.1	Participants	47
3.3.2	Settings	47
3.3.3	Ethnographic techniques	49
3.4	Methods of data collection	50
3.4.1	Observation and video recordings	50
3.4.2	Post-lesson discussions and interviews	51
3.4.3	Document analysis	52
3.4.4	Respondent validation	53
3.4.5	Research diary	54
3.4.6	Transcriptions	54
3.5	Reflexivity in qualitative research	55
3.6	Research ethics	57
3.6.1	Familiarity and participation	58
3.6.2	Status of researcher	59
3.7	Validity and reliability	61
3.8	The process of data analysis	62
3.8.1	Analytical procedures	64
3.8.2	Coding and categorisation	65
3.9	Limitations of the research	67
3.10	Conclusions to Chapter 3	68

Chapter 4: Data analysis I: An examination of micro-scaffolding

4.1	Introduction	69
4.2	Interaction in which there was little scaffolding	70
4.2.1	Lack of opportunities for trainee to respond	70
4.2.2	Tensions in feedback focus	72
4.3	Trainee-initiated exchanges	76
4.3.1	Trainee questions	76
4.3.2	Trainee justifications	78
4.4	Trainer-initiated exchanges	80
4.4.1	Questions	80
4.4.2	Reference to documents	83
4.4.3	Scaffolding: working in the trainee's ZPD	85
4.5	Conclusion to Chapter 4	87

Chapter 5: Data analysis II: An examination of macro-scaffolding

5.1	Introduction	89
5.2	Discourses of ELT	90
5.2.1	'Mistakes': 'good' and 'bad' teaching	91
5.2.2	Conventions of lesson feedback	96
5.3	Theory and practice	102
5.4	Conclusion to Chapter 5	104

Chapter 6: Discussion and conclusion

6.1	Introduction	106
6.2	Summary of the research	107
6.3	The relationship between micro and macro scaffolding	108
6.4.1	Micro-scaffolding: Obstacles to scaffolding	109
6.4.2	Scaffolding techniques which can support	110
6.4.3	Trainee-initiated interactions: Questions and justifications	112
6.4.4	Conclusions on micro-scaffolding	112
6.4.5	Levels of scaffolding	114
6.5	Contextual scaffolding conditions	115
6.5.1	Discourses of ELT training	115
6.5.2	Theory and practice	116

6.6	Personal learning points and recommendations for practice	118
6.7	Recommendations for further research	120
6.8	Conclusion to Chapter 6	121
References		123
Appendices		134
 <u>Figures</u>		
	Figure 1: The relationship between micro and macro-scaffolding	108
	Figure 2: Overlapping levels of micro-scaffolding	114

Abbreviations

L1 – first language

L2 – second language

EFL – English as a foreign language

ESL – English as a second language

TESOL – Teaching English to speakers of other languages

TEFL – Teaching English as a foreign language

SCT – Socio-cultural theory

SLTE – Second language teacher education

ZPD – Zone of proximal development

NS – native speaker of English

NNS – non-native speaker of English

TESEP – Tertiary, secondary, primary education

Abstract

This thesis presents a description and analysis of scaffolding in the construction of teaching knowledge in a pre-service teacher training course in a Turkish university. Prior research in the area of scaffolding in primary school classrooms has focused on pupils operating in their native language and their interactions with the teacher and each other. The nature of scaffolding in the construction of knowledge has been identified and explored at an interactional level of talk. While these studies have informed educational practice in schools and teacher training contexts, there has been little research which puts the social, cultural and linguistic context at the heart of scaffolding. This thesis is based on a socio-cultural theory of learning and as such recognizes the influence of the context on the scaffolding of construction of teaching knowledge.

This research was a qualitative study utilizing ethnographic techniques. Data emerged over time from recorded feedback sessions, recorded input sessions, self-evaluations, assignments, respondent validations and research diary. It became apparent early on in the study that scaffolding was taking place at both a micro-level, as manifested in the interaction between trainer and trainee, and at a macro-level, as manifested in the context of the training. The context of training included the second language context, the discourses of teaching and training, and the relationship between theory and practice.

This study is significant in that it highlights the relationship between context and talk in scaffolding the construction of teaching knowledge. Hitherto, this relationship has not been emphasized in reports on scaffolding. The mutually beneficial relationship of macro and micro-scaffolding points to a teacher training pedagogy which acknowledges both macro-conditions for scaffolding, as well as micro-scaffolding techniques at an interactional level.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Teacher training has had a significant role in education for decades (Howatt 2004). In English language teaching, teacher training has evolved and developed over the last 20 years (Freeman 1996, Freeman and Johnson 1998, Richards and Nunan 1990). There is considerable literature on English teacher education, development and training (Freeman 2002, Wallace 1991, Woodward 1991), as well as many discussions on the semantic differences between these terms. All over the world, there is a plethora of different teacher training courses, certificates and diplomas in English Language Teaching (e.g. Cambridge 2009). There is much discussion and advice on how to train teachers, both native speakers of English and non-native speakers of English (Doff 1988, Harmer 2001, Ur 1999). One important element of this training is the pedagogy or the methodology of the teaching and training itself (Bromme and Tillema 1995, Cochran-Smith 2005, Yates and Muchisky 2003) and there has been an explosion of research in the last decade particularly on teacher learning and teacher cognition (Borg 2003, Cabaroglu and Roberts 2000).

From the perspective of socio-cultural theory, learning takes place in a particular social context, and this learning takes place in interaction with others (Daniels 2001, Vygotsky 1986). One of the tools of mediation between the subject to be learnt and the teacher learner is talk. There has been much research into the role of talk in primary schools in the UK (Mercer 1995, 2000, Myhill 2004, Myhill and Warren 2005), and work on scaffolding talk in EFL teaching contexts (Jarvis and Robinson 1997). The findings from this research highlight the crucial role the teacher plays in the instructional conversation.

Teachers, students, teacher trainers and trainees spend a great deal of their time interacting with others, both verbally and in written form. Along with more obvious educational tools such as technology and printed matter, this interaction is in fact a significant educational tool in its own right. How the interaction is organised, how speakers participate, and the content of the interaction are all important and interesting factors in an examination of learning. Despite the rich literature in terms of scaffolding talk in primary schools and EFL learning environments, to date relatively little research has taken the role and concept of talk in the English teacher training experience into consideration.

This thesis puts the actual talk of the interaction at the core of its investigation. By talk I refer to pedagogic talk and instructive, dialogic conversations. The major premise of this research is that in order to help trainees construct their knowledge of teaching, we need to know how talk scaffolds teacher development. In broad terms, scaffolding refers to temporary, essential assistance which aids learners' knowledge construction (Gibbons 2006). Scaffolding mediates learning, and the nature of the scaffolding is often seen as dialogical (ibid).

However, talk alone cannot scaffold the construction of knowledge. The physical, cultural and social contexts play significant roles in the scaffolding of knowledge (Hammond and Gibbons 2005, Lantolf and Thorne 2006, Vygotsky 1986). Contextual factors may be at a macro level, such as institutional and organisational level, or at a micro level, that is, at talk level. Thus, if the pedagogy and context of training are important to how we support and scaffold our trainees, then we need to examine this contextual support in more detail. We also need to investigate how scaffolding takes place, and what the conditions for scaffolding are. In other words, we need to examine micro and macro scaffolding techniques and how they can scaffold the construction of teaching knowledge.

This research set out to examine the talk between myself as trainer and my trainees on a pre-service teacher training programme for Turkish teachers of English. This study specifically focused on how I scaffolded the trainees' construction of teaching knowledge. This involved studying the talk between trainer and trainee, but it also necessitated an examination of the wider context, the social, professional and cultural context of the training. The major concern of this thesis is an examination of what scaffolding actually looks like in such a context in terms of actual talk and contextual support.

The centrality of talk and conversation in the process of constructing knowledge was simply put by a participant in this research:

‘Depending on our conversations that we have had in this classroom with you, I became aware that as a teacher, I should learn my students’ interests because I observed that this helped’ (RF 9).

The trainee refers explicitly to talk and how it guided her thinking. An examination of this guidance involves an investigation into scaffolding techniques used by the trainer and the trainee in a particular social context. This research aims to explore the scaffolding that takes place between trainer and trainee and its relationship with the construction of knowledge.

My research questions were:

Research question 1: What are the characteristics of scaffolding in trainer and trainee talk in a Turkish teacher training context with Turkish speaking English teacher trainees?

Research question 2: What is the relationship between scaffolding talk and the Turkish teacher training context with Turkish speaking English teacher trainees?

This research centred on my work with a group of 28 teacher trainees in their final year of study at university. I worked closely with them on a daily basis from September 2008 – May 2009. This constituted two different semesters of their final year. They all graduated in June 2009 with an MA in English Teacher Education and qualified teacher status.

I used a multi-method approach for this study utilising ethnographic techniques. These included observation, analysis of feedback sessions, document analysis, assignments, research diary and general observations from working with this particular cohort of trainees. My feedback sessions with the trainees took place almost immediately after teaching practice lessons. The feedback was recorded and transcribed within a week of the actual feedback session. Some of my themes were corroborated by colleagues who read my analysis and expressed the level of resonance that they felt with the data. The trainees' voices were a significant input into this study, and they were represented by their assignments, self-evaluation reports and their respondent feedback. This thesis is based on the active participation and actual talk of the participants.

1.2 My personal position in relation to this research

When I began this study I had been teaching English for 22 years in both secondary and tertiary education. I had also trained teachers at these levels for 18 years. For most of my professional life I have been curious about the relationship between language and learning, and more specifically, talk as the mediator in learning. I have worked with many experienced teacher trainers and trainees. I have observed conversations and interactions in a variety of contexts. I have continuously questioned what the crucial factors were in supporting my trainee's construction of teaching knowledge. Based on these observations and questions, I

sought to examine in a more systematic and contextualised process how language, talk and context influence the construction of teaching knowledge.

A socio-cultural perspective on learning (Lantolf and Thorne 2006, Vygotsky 1986) was a key element of my study, as it fitted well with my experiences and observations over the years. Working with a group of trainees on a daily basis, and in such close proximity, gave me the opportunity to examine how talk scaffolded or did not scaffold their construction of teaching knowledge.

Prior to the beginning of the research I had been working in the Graduate School of Education as a lecturer for six years part-time, and two years full-time. I taught courses to both undergraduate and post-graduate English Teacher Education students.

I played several roles in this research. Firstly, I was their teacher trainer. I was responsible for the final 18 months of the training for this group of trainees. This meant coordinating with other lecturers who taught them, organising standardisation meetings with colleagues on the same course, organising regular meetings to discuss grades. I was also their lecturer for several courses including teaching methodology. I was their school experience and teaching practice supervisor, which meant I gave both verbal and written feedback, and ultimately graded them on their teaching performance. I was also university advisor to nine members of the group. Finally, I was the researcher. I had worked with many of these students also in their undergraduate years, teaching different courses. We had built a strong rapport which I believe gives credibility to my story (Creswell 2003). I had a central role in their academic life, and they also played a very important part in my own professional life. Although this ‘backyard’ research (Glesne and Peshkin 1992, cited by Creswell 2003) can be criticized as being too close to one’s every day work and context, I used several strategies to check the accuracy of my data and ensure validity. These included temporal triangulation and triangulation of sources, as well as addressing my bias and prejudice throughout the thesis.

The ‘I’ in this research was a strong element. I played a variety of roles in their academic and pastoral lives. I also brought with me to the research 18 years of teacher training experience. This experience was with Turkish teacher trainees; therefore my reflexivity involved not only my roles of researcher and participant, but also my experience in this research context.

I analysed the data which comprised my talk with the trainees. This close relationship of researcher, participant, data-analyst and writer inevitably ‘pervades all aspects’ of the research process (Holliday 2002, p.154). However, I viewed this personal influence and perspective as a ‘resource’ (ibid, p.145). Through working closely with my trainees, and looking at data which included my own talk, inevitably ‘the personal-self becomes inseparable from the researcher-self’ (Creswell 2003), and my story is a stronger one as a result. I will clarify in Chapter 3 how I maintained academic integrity, rigour and accuracy in such a reflexive undertaking.

1.3 Institutional and national context

This research took place in the context of an MA programme at Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkey (Bilkent 2009). Bilkent University is a large English-medium university in the capital city of Turkey. It was set up in 1984 as the first private university in Turkey. The name ‘Bilkent’ means ‘city of knowledge’ and the university is known for its strong and successful engineering and science departments. The faculty includes staff from 43 different countries, many from the UK, America, Australia, and also countries such as Russia and India. Bilkent is therefore a multi-cultural campus with English as the official language of the University. At the time of writing this thesis, there were about 12,000 students at both under-graduate and post-graduate level (Bilkent 2009).

The education system in Turkish schools is still largely teacher-centred and memory-based (Akşit and Sands 2006). The national curriculum for English is currently being reformed, and bringing in new movements in English language teaching such as the Common European Framework of References (Council of Europe 2009, Morrow 2004), and particularly the English Language Portfolio (Council of Europe 2009). These are attempts to move Turkey towards its social and political goals of joining the European Union (Grossman et al. 2007). Nevertheless, the state system has only a few hours weekly devoted to English, and students leaving high school are often only at elementary level. The vision of the rector of Bilkent University was that the Graduate School of Education would train teachers of English, History, Maths, Biology and Turkish in ‘new’ ways and set up such teachers as models for other schools to emulate (Koç et al. 1998). To this end, the programme allowed some students to spend two months in the US at schools as part of their internship, and also allowed some students to teach for two weeks in highly prestigious schools in Istanbul (Bilkent University

2009). The schools in which all students spent their internship in Ankara are also prestigious private schools, some of which teach the International Baccalaureate (IBO 2009)

1.4 My contribution to the field of language teacher training

The focus of this thesis is trainer and trainee talk in the construction of teaching knowledge in a Turkish English teacher training context. It assumes that knowledge is socially and culturally constructed. The essence of this thesis is that it is language and context which play crucial mediating roles in the co-construction of knowledge. The data which emerged out of this research portrayed how scaffolding worked with a specific group of trainees in a specific training context. Nevertheless, I believe that teacher trainers in similar contexts, where the trainees' first language is not English, and where they are learning to be secondary school English teachers, will find common experiences with the story I tell.

Specifically, this research provides a theoretical data-driven framework for how macro-scaffolding conditions and micro-scaffolding techniques are symbiotic. This framework goes some way to explaining how context-sensitive and trainee-sensitive scaffolding can take place, be blocked, or ignored. Based on this framework, I make suggestions for how scaffolding can be optimised. My research both confirms and builds on some of the instinctive feelings and experiences that teacher trainers have in their interactions with teacher trainees. This research is an attempt to systematically and critically evaluate these interactions, with reference to the social and cultural context of learning. Teacher trainers working with both native speakers of English trainees and L2 trainees will find practical suggestions for how they can best support their teacher learners.

1.5 Overview of the chapters

Chapter 2 of this thesis document is a substantive literature review. This chapter examines research on socio-cultural perspectives in learning and teaching, and how this framework is being applied to teacher training. This chapter also gives an overview of the relevant research into the role of talk in teaching and training, and the role of discourses at a social and contextual level. Chapter 2 also positions this research in the field, outlining how the work in this research has contributed to knowledge on scaffolding potentials and conditions in a training context.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology used in this research. I argue for the use of qualitative research within an interpretivist / constructivist paradigm and describe the ethnographic techniques that I used. I outline my reflexivity in this research and finally I describe the analytical procedures and the coding and categorising process.

Chapter 4 is the first of two chapters which present my data analysis. Chapter 4 presents the findings on micro-scaffolding and Chapter 5 presents the findings on macro-scaffolding. Both chapters present data which reveal scaffolding in its 'raw' form, with misunderstandings and missed potentials for scaffolding.

Chapter 6 presents the implications of my findings, and relates these to the research questions. This chapter also places my research findings in the current literature and highlights how my research has contributed to the field. Based on the data, I argue for a framework which describes scaffolding as a technique, as well as a condition. This chapter also suggests recommendations for practice and further research in the area of scaffolding the construction of teaching knowledge.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will position my work in relation to previous research and discussions in the area of language teacher education. Specifically, I will place my research in the debates on knowledge construction in a socio-cultural framework. Firstly I will discuss some of the key principles of sociocultural theory and its key tenets. Secondly I will discuss and deconstruct the terms talk, language and discourses and their roles in the construction of knowledge. I will then examine the area of second language teacher education (SLTE), particularly work that has been done within a sociocultural framework. Finally I will consider the nature and types of knowledge and how knowledge is constructed, with specific reference to teacher learning.

Through the presentation and discussion of previous and current research relevant to my thesis, I hope to clarify the position that my research will take. As such, my research questions are refined by this process and will be presented at the end of the literature review. The organisation of the chapter mirrors my reading and questioning process as I sought to specify my research focus.

2.2 Socio-cultural theory: the main tenets

This section contextualises studies on classroom talk by discussing the main principles in socio-cultural theory, and their relationship to the study of talk. From the research being carried out in classrooms, there is considerable evidence for the pivotal position of talk in learning (Gibbons 2006, Mercer 1995, Myhill 2004, 2006, Myhill and Warren 2005). Such recognition and valorisation of the role of talk in learning provides a firm basis for the discussion of studying talk in a teacher training context.

This thesis takes a view of learning as socio-cultural in that learning takes place through mediation with a more competent other. At the centre of this study is a Vygotskian conceptual framework based on socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky 1986). In this section I briefly analyse the relevant principles and tenets of this theory to my research with regard to situated learning, mediation, scaffolding and the zone of proximal development.

2.2.1 Situated learning

A Vygotskian conceptual framework of learning in a particular social context puts great emphasis on relationships and interactions. A situative perspective is the lens for exploring the construction of knowledge where the social and cultural are prioritized (Cobb and Bowers 1999, Daniels 2001, Putnam and Borko 2000, Swain and Deters 2007). Knowledge is the product of interaction with others and also with the discourse communities in which the learners are situated (Putnam and Borko 2000). For the purposes of my thesis, I will refer to the trainees' situated learning in understanding how social context affects or influences their construction of knowledge. I will consider how actions and interactions are embedded in the culture and history of my trainees.

Similarly, learning contexts have a macro-structure and involve micro-practices of students and teachers (Daniels 1995). Participation in a particular social practice is an essential part of learning. The notions of macro-structure and micro-practices are particularly relevant to this research as I examine not only the dialogues in my training contexts, but also the organisation and structure of the training experience. In this research context, learning to teach either through University classes or during teaching practice in schools is clearly a social practice. Trainees have to understand this social practice, how it works, how to go about the activity of being a teacher. As trainees however, they are not yet full participants of the teaching and school community. Their membership is that of a student teacher in a University (Moje and Wade 1997) and their practice is considered legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger 1991).

Legitimate peripheral participation is defined as denoting 'the particular model of engagement of a learner who participates in the actual practice of an expert, but only to a limited degree and with limited responsibility for the ultimate product as a whole' (Lave and Wenger 1991, p.14).

Although I believe this concept is highly relevant to the lives of trainee teachers, or the 'trajectory' of teacher training (Daniels 2001), in teaching I believe that the teacher, whether they are trainee or not, still has considerable responsibility for their work. Their responsibility may be more limited than that of the regular teacher, but in terms of the product, the trainee teacher is responsible for the outcome of that particular lesson. My student teachers are part of

the community, but have yet to fully understand all aspects of the joint activity that teachers are engaged in. According to Wenger (1999), learning involves community, identity, meaning and practice. The practice is not just doing, but talking about shared social frameworks. Inevitably, then, the social practice in which my trainees are learning can influence their learning. This is significant in the case of my study which is concerned with how such contextual influences impacted on the trainees' construction of teaching knowledge. The interaction between the learner and the context is as crucial to the study of knowledge construction as is the interaction between the social bodies.

Vygotsky and other researchers in socio-cultural theory postulate that learning is mediated by cultural tools (Daniels 2001, Lantolf and Thorne 2006). Socio-cultural theory (SCT) is a 'theory of mediated mental development, it is most compatible with theories of language which focus on communication, cognition, and meaning rather than on formalist positions that privilege structure' (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006, p.4).

Lantolf and Thorne (ibid) also suggest that SCT offers a framework with which we can systematically investigate cognition in its social context. The social context refers to the existence of others, and in an educational context this refers to the teacher and other pupils. In this study, this framework provides a basis for examining the social context of trainer and trainees in a particular educational context.

2.2.2 Mediation

Vygotsky (1986) proposed that there are two stages to constructing knowledge. First we understand on a social level – between people, the dialogic nature of understanding. Secondly we understand individually, the understanding that happens inside ourselves (ibid). This is known as 'the path along which the cultural development evolves' (Vygotsky 1929). In order to get to this stage of internalization, the new topic has to be mediated through a tool, in this case, language. Language is used then to mediate between the thinking individual and the subject of study. This interactional experience is also known as 'interthinking' (Mercer and Littleton 2007) and the basic premise is that thinking and higher cognitive development occur through social interaction (Lantolf and Appel 1994). Such a notion is vital to teacher training contexts since most teacher training activities are highly social and interactive.

At the heart of the act of talk is language. Language can be written, or spoken, that is speech

(Mercer 2008). Thus talk refers specifically to the language that trainees and trainers use in social interaction. The role of talk is to develop higher functioning and thus learning. It is through use of particular talk that teachers can guide and support their students towards learning, thus development (Mercer 1995, 2000, Vygotsky 1986). This development is a major goal of the teacher training programme described and presented in this thesis (Daniels 2001). What I am specifically concerned with is how talk and interaction act as the support mechanisms by which trainees construct knowledge of teaching. Such support may be classified as scaffolding (Gibbons 2006).

2.2.3 Scaffolding

Scaffolding as a metaphor to describe the assistance a teacher or more knowledgeable peer can give in a learning context derived from the work of Wood et al. (1976). The term scaffolding was introduced in the context of tutorials and refers to the help given by a teacher or more able peer in an educational setting. The goal of research in the area of scaffolding has been to explore the nature of the support that the more competent other provides in the learning context (Wood and Wood 1996). The two principles on which they base their approach to tutoring are uncertainty and contingency. These principles guide the scaffolding and the prompts that the tutor gives to the learner. Wood et al. (1976) specifically refer to the contingency feature of scaffolding, that scaffolding is ‘task and tutee dependent’ (p.97). This feature of ‘fine-tuning’ scaffolding according to the learner is particularly relevant to this study.

Bruner (1978, cited by Mercer 1995) writes of scaffolding thus ‘(it) refers to the steps taken to reduce the degrees of freedom in carrying out some task so that the child can concentrate on the difficult skill she is in the process of acquiring’ (p.73).

The nature of scaffolding is not to simplify the task, but to reduce levels of difficulty, or uncertainty, for the successful achievement of the task. Mercer (ibid) gives the example of a parent helping a child with a jigsaw for the first time. The parent may show how to recognise and then match the edges, and then how to look for patterns. Thus, what seemed like an impossible task has now been broken down into manageable pieces. Over time, the child will do this independently. The adult may then teach other strategies for doing more difficult jigsaws. In an educational setting, the teacher or a more able peer can provide this support and

scaffolding through dialogue. This research is specifically interested in exploring what this dialogue looks like.

In the literature on schooling there are numerous references as to how a teacher might effectively scaffold learning (see for example Daniels 2001, Mercer 1995, 2000). Alexander (2004) gives the following definition of scaffolded dialogue. It is 'achieving common understanding through structured, cumulative questioning and discussion which guide and prompt, reduce choices, minimize risk and error, and expedite 'handover' of concepts and principles' (p.23).

This definition points us to search for functions of talk. This is the first step. However, these functions need to be disassembled. In this research I intend to examine what cumulative questioning is, and what type of talk guides and prompts. These are questions I intend to research in the talk between myself and the trainees.

Research which aimed to study the nature of scaffolding in the school context resulted in a framework of interactional level and contextual level scaffolding (Hammond and Gibbons 2005). Interactional scaffolding referred to the support in terms of the dialogue between teacher and learner, while 'designed-in' (p.12) scaffolding referred to the curriculum and planning stage of the teaching. This distinction between interactional and contextual scaffolding was highly relevant for my study of scaffolding as manifested in the talk, and scaffolding at a contextual level.

I argue that scaffolding, whether with children in a primary classroom, or with teacher trainees in a second language learning environment, means support for learning. The more competent other limits the unknown and allows the teacher to control the elements which may challenge the learner. There is discussion of how teacher trainers might successfully scaffold in a teacher education context (Black 2007, Bliss et al.1996, McCafferty 2002, Wood and Wood 1996) and Lantolf and Thorne (2006) remind us of the power vested in the teacher or trainer as part of their scaffolding role. Wood and Wood (1996, cited by Daniels 2001) suggest levels of increasing tutor control in the learning context. These levels range from level 0 which is no assistance, to level 5, which is demonstrate use. This conceptualization of levels of assistance is highly relevant to an examination of scaffolding in interaction in a teacher training context.

Thus, it is clear that scaffolding is no longer a concept relevant only to teaching children and in primary school classrooms. As well as the role of talk itself, Vygotsky was concerned with the role teachers play in guiding and supporting students so that they can work in their zone of proximal development (Daniels 2001, 2005).

2.2.4 The zone of proximal development

The term ‘zone of proximal development’ has been used extensively in education and there is considerable discussion as to the meaning and application of this term (Bliss et al. 1996, Daniels 2001, 2005, Guk and Kellog 2007, Kinginger 2002, McCafferty 2002, Wood and Wood 1996). The zone of proximal development (ZPD) refers to the gap between what the learner can do alone, and what the learner can do with guidance (Vygotsky 1986, Wood and Wood 1996).

For example, two children aged 8 are given an exercise that they could not manage on their own. Both children are given some assistance e.g. ‘the first step in a solution, a leading question, or some other form of help’ (Vygotsky 1986, p.187). One child could manage the exercise for a 12 year old; the other child could manage the exercise for a 9-year old. The first child has a larger ZPD. Thus, my argument is that the talk the teacher or trainer uses to scaffold learning is significant. Certain talk may help to develop a greater ZPD. Vygotsky puts language at the centre of his argument on developing ZPD by giving ‘a leading question’ as an example of guidance in the ZPD.

Although Vygotsky himself did not introduce the term ‘scaffolding’, there has been considerable discussion as to the relationship between ZPD and scaffolding (Bliss et al. 1996, Jones et al. 1998, Wood et al. 1976, Wood and Wood 1996). There seems to be a consensus that scaffolding is the instructional strategy suggested by Vygotsky’s reference to assistance by a more able peer. In other words, Vygotsky provided the ‘theoretical anchoring’ (Bliss et al. 1996, p.38) for the notion of scaffolding, or ‘intervention’ (Woods and Woods 1996). However, there are dissenters who argue that the theory of ZPD can only be applied to a learning context where a theory of development has been described (Chaiklin 2003). There is a feeling that the notion of ZPD has become more of a metaphor rather than a theoretical construct and should only be used in discussions of whole child development:

‘It seems more appropriate to use the term ZPD to refer to the phenomenon that Vygotsky was writing about and find other terms (e.g. assisted instruction, scaffolding) to refer to practices such as teaching a specific subject matter, concept, skill and so forth’ (p.59).

The ZPD is used in a variety of ways in education today (Kington 2002) and despite the myriad of different conceptualisations and uses in education; there is at least now more focus on collaboration and social interaction in learning and teaching. There is however, a call for more linking between the cognitive and social in studies of ZPD. Cole (1985) has suggested that the ZPD is where culture and cognition create each other. His point is that the study of cognitive development needs to be embedded more in the study of the cultural and social circumstances in which people are operating. These ideas are relevant to my study of the relationship between scaffolding functions of the social and cultural, as well as the functions of interactional talk.

I use the ZPD concept as a construct to describe and recognise differing levels of abilities which require differing scaffolding strategies. The ZPD was significant when I engaged in discussion with my trainees and listened to their responses. The ZPD helped me to understand the progression of my trainees as novice teachers to more competent and established teaching professionals. What is missing from discussions of ZPD is an acknowledgement that differing ZPDs require different scaffolding, and that a learner’s ZPD can change over an activity and within a specific interaction. I believe that trainers need to be sensitive to the trainee’s ZPD, which can change from moment to moment in the interaction. This sensitivity is crucial in order to decide the most appropriate type of scaffolding. This research goes some way to making the link between differing ZPDs and differing levels of scaffolding.

2.3 Language and talk

As mentioned earlier, talk is oral language. Since writers use both ‘talk’ and ‘language’ to describe the function of words as a mediating tool (Gibbons 2006, Mercer 1995, 2000, Vygotsky 1986), I will use the two terms interchangeably. Recently there has been discussion as to whether ‘speech’ is a better translation of the original Russian in Vygotsky’s work (Mercer 2008) since ‘speech’ better connotes the idea of social interaction. However, one problem with this strict adherence to the oral form of language is that any studies which focus on written language as scaffolding tools (Golombek and Johnson 2004, Johnson 2007) in

personal narratives are thus not considered to be in a socio-cultural framework. Although most of my data is speech, I also use documents such as lesson reflections and respondent validations, as I believe that written language is also a strong mediator in constructing and reconstructing knowledge. Such tools are also referred to as meditational means by Wertsch (1998) and can be used in a variety of ways depending on the goals of the teacher.

One major feature of SCT is the relationship between word and thought. The following quote not only highlights this relationship, but also leaves open the possibility for the written word as well as the oral word to be mediators in scaffolding. ‘Thought is not merely expressed in words; it comes into existence through them. Every thought tends to connect something to something else, to establish a relation between things’ (Vygotsky 1986, p.218).

In other words, talk is not just a result of our thinking; the talk also guides our thinking. In a teacher training context, the talk takes place in social interaction between trainer and trainees, ‘thinking bodies’ (Lantolf and Thorne 2006), objects and artefacts (Vygotsky 1986). Examples of the latter may be lesson plans, videos, written prompts and the like. In this section I will examine the role of talk in learning, with specific reference to research carried out in school classrooms, and also the very specific role of questions in scaffolding.

2.3.1 The role of talk in learning

This topic has been discussed at great length in the literature on school learning (Mercer 1995, 2000, Mercer and Littleton 2007, Myhill 2004, 2006, Myhill and Warren 2005). In fact, Edwards and Westgate (1994) give a brief summary of the history of the study of talk in classrooms, noting that it was not really until the 1970s that the role of language and dialogue was given prominence in educational literature and research. In this section I will briefly review the literature on the role of teacher talk in constructing knowledge.

Language has a great role to play in conceptualising and making meaningful ideas and new knowledge. ‘...without language, we would not have, so to speak, general ideas; for it is the word which, in fixing them, gives to concepts a consistency sufficient for them to be able to be handled conveniently by the mind’ (Durkheim 1956, cited by Lauder et.al 2006, p.82)

Vygotsky (1986) claims that it is by talking about a topic that we learn. By expressing our ideas and discussing them with others, we learn and thus develop our knowledge. Knowledge

is a social activity, not a possession. He believes that language is a cultural tool or cultural artefact that we can use to mediate between the subject (the participants) and the object (the topic). 'Experience teaches us that thought does not express itself in words, but realizes itself in them' (Vygotsky 1986, p.251). In the literature the words tool and artefact are used interchangeably, but it is argued that tool is a sub-set of artefact (Daniels 2001). For the purposes of this discussion, I shall use the word tool as I feel it better represents the active and dynamic force of language

Classroom talk as 'dialogue' is based on a Bakhtinian concept whereby talk is only considered a dialogue if an answer would always lead to another question. In other words, dialogue is characterised by the use of questions (Anton 1999, Myhill and Dunkin 2005). Peled- Elhanan and Blum-Kulka (2006) discuss the different types of classroom talk which are Socratic talk, pseudo dialogic talk and monologue. Only the first is considered to be 'instructive dialogue' which is at the 'core of successful teaching and learning' (p.110). In a teacher training context, much of the work I undertake with my trainees is based on dialogue and structured discussions of teaching. Our dialogue is characterized by an utterance, a reply, and the relationship between them (Clarke 2008). Thus the characteristics of this dialogue are open to scrutiny in this research in the context of dialogue for learning.

The terms 'discussion', 'conversation' and 'dialogue' are used extensively in the literature to describe classroom interactions, with 'dialogue' seen as a more instructional form of interaction (Alexander 2001, 2004, Henning 2008, Skidmore 2000). Classroom talk can be expository, interrogatory, dialogic or evaluative (Alexander 2001, p.15). Classroom talk can also be defined as conversation with specific discourse patterns such as divergent, convergent, inductive and deductive (Henning 2008). Divergent dialogue or 'dialogical pedagogy' is more likely to lead to development as there is no single correct answer (Skidmore 2000). I believe that the relevance of the above terms is that any of the 'talk' can scaffold learning; it depends on the language form, function and response. What we need to consider when evaluating talk as instructional or not is the context of the talk. As stated above, the terms and descriptions presented by various researchers can serve as a beginning of a framework for analysing trainer talk, but there needs to be more emphasis on the linguistic forms and functions of classroom talk, as well as the contexts. I shall discuss the contexts for talk in 2.4.

If we agree that it is language which is the mediating tool between the teacher, student and

topic to be learned, then it follows that it is crucial to analyse this language so that better guides can be provided for teachers and trainers. As Alexander (2001, p.430) states ‘The talk that takes place between a teacher and pupil and – less commonly among pupils themselves – is not merely a vehicle for the exchange of information. It is a vital tool of learning’.

It has been found that teachers can successfully scaffold learning in the following ways. Teachers elicit knowledge from learners through direct and cued elicitations. They respond to what learners say through confirmations, rejections, elaborations and reformulations and they describe significant aspects of shared experience through ‘we’ statements, literal recaps and reconstructive recaps (Mercer 1995, p.34, 2000, p.138). Much of the research on classroom talk has resulted in practical publications for teachers on developing ‘effective’ teacher talk to support learning (Hughes 1987, Myhill et al. 2006). However, these publications do not always fully consider the context of the learning.

Although there is little analysis of trainer – trainee talk (cf. Clifton 2006, Walsch 2006) one of the main, unsurprising findings of classroom talk is that a major function is teacher questions (Myhill and Dunkin 2005). This finding is particularly relevant to my study, as trainers and trainees take on similar relationships and interactions to those in classroom contexts (Bailey 2006).

2.3.2 The role of questions in teacher talk

There has been considerable examination of the use of questions in classroom-based teaching (Dillon 1990, Myhill and Dunkin 2005) and in particular second language classrooms (Nunan 1991, Richards and Lockhart 1996, Van Lier 1988). The type of teacher question can either support or impede pupil learning. For example, speculative questions which encouraged hypothesising and imagining resulted in pupils having to express their thoughts and develop their knowledge (Myhill and Dunkin 2005).

As pointed out in 2.2.3, questions are a key strategy in scaffolding. Questions vary in terms of their cognitive demand and this is highly relevant in a study of language for scaffolding knowledge construction (Bloom 1956). Bloom’s taxonomy of cognitive domain places recall questions and comprehension questions at the lowest level of cognitive processing, and evaluative and speculative questions at the top level (ibid). Thus according to the taxonomy, least cognitive processing is taking place with recall and comprehension questions. However,

it is important to note that there is still a place for recall questions (Alexander 2001, 2004, Gibbons 2006, Mercer 1995, 2000). Recall questions do serve important educational functions that are to check understanding, to situate the new information and to establish a common and shared understanding of the material.

Despite this focus on questions in school classrooms, there has been relatively little research in terms of the use of questions in a teacher training context. In a teacher training context, questions aim to encourage reflection and are considered non-directive interventions (Hyland and Lo 2006). Although Bailey (2006) reports that ‘why’ questions from supervisors helped the teachers to consider elements of successful teaching, ‘why’ questions can also be considered confrontational (Fanselow 1988).

The above work is a significant contribution to understanding what strategies and functions teachers can utilise to scaffold the process of learning by co-constructing knowledge. However, there is still a paucity of such language description, and in terms of teacher training contexts there is little indeed. I contend that it is not enough to look at the strategies teachers use. There are three main areas that we still need to consider. One is that we also need to analyse how teachers do the above, and what language teachers use. My research will contribute to this lack in the literature and analyse the language that trainers use to co-construct knowledge in a tertiary second language environment. Secondly, the examples of interaction presented in the literature are neat and tidy, with the scaffolding technique or strategy exemplified in the exchange.

However, I do not believe that interactions run so smoothly. There are multiple opportunities for scaffolds to be missed and misunderstood. Thirdly, I question whether the researchers can so confidently state that the children are constructing knowledge based on a particular question type. In my opinion, the way forward is to regard scaffolding as more than just a set of questions or prompts. These are necessary, but so are the contextual conditions for scaffolding, and I believe the two are mutually dependent.

Language does not stand alone, it is part of, and produces particular discourses. No study of language and talk in context is complete without an examination of the discourses in which the trainer and the trainee are operating.

2.4 Discourses

As mentioned earlier, SCT places great emphasis on the social and cultural context. I believe it is necessary therefore to explore the discourses in which my trainees and I were working. I use the plural term to indicate that we were operating in many discourses such as teaching discourses in school, professional discourses, university student discourses amongst others. Talk and particular language forms are a manifestation of a particular context. In this section I will present and discuss the theoretical sources for the term ‘discourses’, teacher training discourses and the relationship between discourses and power, as portrayed in the training context.

Discourses are not just the language and values that we choose, but also our professional practice. Discourses organize our thinking and determine our behaviour. Discourses promote certain ways of behaving and promote norms. The discourses of ELT can be seen in the books on pedagogy that are promoted, the articles written by mostly native-speakers in the professional journals and the language used at conferences to talk about current events or topics. It is according to the prevailing discourses that we make decisions and judge ourselves and others. Discourses promote power relationships and ideologies which influence the pedagogy used in teaching and training:

‘...discourse, in this sense, is relationships of power / knowledge that are embedded in social institutions and practices. They are ways of organising meaning that are both reflected and produced in our uses of language and the formation of our subjectivities’ (Pennycook 1994, p.32).

One manifestation of this power is the way in which the trainer conceptualises ‘good’ teaching and a ‘good’ lesson. This impacts on the whole approach to the training and the content of the training.

However, I believe it is important to point out that in emphasising the power of discourses; we are also in danger of creating a new discourse, that which suggests a passive, reluctant trainee and the over-confident trainer. The reality of the power of the trainer and the restricting discourses lies in the ability of trainees to reflect on and construct their own beliefs about ‘good’ and ‘bad’ teaching (Clarke 2008).

2.4.1 Teacher Training discourses: a blue-print approach

Teacher training discourse is manifested by the pedagogy that is used and considered acceptable and the notions of ‘effective’ teaching. Discourses can be seen by the practices that are promoted as acceptable, and by the practices that are considered unacceptable. ‘The power to control discourse is seen as the power to sustain particular discursive practices with particular ideological investments in dominance over alternative practices’ (Fairclough 1995, p.2).

The more these discursive practices are promoted, the more acceptable they become. Dominant discourses in ELT emerge when patterns of behaving and thinking become accepted as the norm.

There is a lot of judgement making in teacher training from the models and approaches used in input, to the feedback given in teaching practice. Baxter (2003) researched the discourse of ELT training in the UK and found that there is an institutionalized practice with its own norms of practice which:

‘socialize trainees into forms of practice which are competence-based, teaching and teacher-centered, and which attempt to separate the theoretical bases of practices from the practices themselves. The scope for voice is not possible due to the discursive practice of ELT training’ (p.6).

This is an example of specific research into the practices of training which reveal the very constricting discourses of teacher education. It would seem that the ELT training discourses mould teachers into a way of teaching, including a focus specifically on low-inference behaviours, a micro rather than macro approach. The danger in criticizing a discourse, however, is that you are in danger of creating a counter-discourse, in this case, of skills-based and learner-centred teaching, and rejecting notions of models and blue-prints.

Nevertheless, there are principles in SCT that support such use of blue-prints for teaching. One effective scaffolding technique is modelling. Much work on scaffolding in SCT has suggested the necessity of modelling and demonstration (Anton 1999, Alexander 2004, Samaras and Gismondi 1998) and in a teacher training context the trainer can be the model, and can demonstrate ‘good practice’ through his or her own teaching and training. This is a situation in which the trainer practises what she preaches, referred to as ‘loop input’ in some training contexts (Woodward 1991, 2003). Mercer (1995) reminds us that a feature of

effective scaffolding is to make smaller the enormity of the task by taking steps to reduce the difficulties. This may be done through modelling. Although modelling is not necessarily the same as a blue-print, to a novice teacher trainee, they may seem the same. With little teaching experience to refer to, a model presented to trainees may seem as the only way to teach.

In order to reduce the degrees of freedom, and to reduce the uncertainty of a task (in this case teaching) we need to give our trainees a model which gives them freedom to work on details of lesson planning, against which they can evaluate theirs and others' practice, and eventually develop their own teaching approach.

In my work with pre-service trainees, I strongly believe that they need some framework in which they can plan their lessons, and try out teaching techniques. Without this infrastructure or base, they would find the planning and teaching task enormous. They would go into their lessons 'unarmed' (Harmer 2003). As the trainees gain experience and confidence, they are able to be more critical of different techniques and evaluate those which are relevant for their teaching context. The trainees are exposed to a variety of methods and approaches in the different schools they teach in, and it is clear from their reflection reports and assignments that they can critically evaluate the methods and techniques they observe. They would not be able to do this without a base.

One could argue that the trainer therefore has ultimate power in the teacher training context. This is part of the dominant discourses of ELT and this will inevitably influence the type of talk that takes place in the training activities. What is significant to the research is the trainee's perception of their own roles and the role of the trainers in this context, and how this affects scaffolding opportunities (Hyland and Lo 2006).

2.4.2 Discourses and power in the training context

The relationship in the classroom as well as the training room between trainer and trainee is not equal (Hyland and Lo 2006, Peled-Elhanan and Blum-Kulka 2006). It would be naive to think that all parties were peers in the dialogue. In the classroom questions are not equally asked by students and teachers (Myhill and Dunkin 2005) and the same is true for the training room. The notion of who has power is evident in the interaction. Although referring to school classrooms, I believe Peled-Elhanan and Blum-Kulka's sentiments are relevant to the training context when they state that 'Differences of age and knowledge alongside administrative

nomination make the teacher the *senior partner* and the students into *junior partners*’ (p.113 emphasis in original).

Foucault takes a post-structuralist approach to discourse, power and knowledge (McHoul and Grace 1993). In the Foucauldian approach, discourse is analysed by considering the social, historical and political conditions under which statements come to count as true or not. Power and knowledge are closely related. Power can be seen in terms of the techniques through which it is exercised and these techniques draw on some authority by referring to scientific truths (ibid). One can see how this power is manifested in teacher training. Theorists have authority as they refer to scientific truths. Trainers have the power as they have knowledge and experience, and all knowledge is ‘interested’ (Pennycook 1989). I think a Foucauldian theory of discourse is relevant to a study based on Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory in that it highlights the importance of recognizing that all interaction and practices are embedded in a particular social, cultural and historical context.

As the trainer I have knowledge, due to my studies and experience. I am explicit that this ‘knowledge’ may be interested, but I argue that to a certain extent trainees expect me to have knowledge, and they do not expect mutual power sharing in the classroom (Nyikos and Hashimoto 1997). This unequal power relationship will inevitably influence the nature and type of classroom talk. This power inequality may be manifested in many ways, such as length of turns, number of turns, initiations and responses, who has the right to speak and give turns. Pre-service trainees in fact expect power differentials but still expect to be active in the discussion of their teaching (Hyland and Lo 2006).

While some may criticise this notion of trainer or teacher having ultimate power (Auerbach 1995), Alexander (2001) reminds us that power is a cultural and social concept. In classrooms in Russia for example, it is expected that the teacher is the authority and drives the discourse. This however does not necessarily mean that the children learn less. In fact, he compares the laid-back progressive conversational discourse of the US classroom with the focused, dialogic teacher-led discourse of the Russian classrooms. For my own research, this notion is relevant in an educational context where teachers are the ultimate authority. The instances of learner-centred teaching strategies may be few, but this does not necessarily mean that learning is not taking place. In fact, such Western Anglophone notions of learner-centredness and critical thinking have been heavily criticized as being culturally imperialistic (Atkinson 1997,

Holliday 2005).

A further aspect of teacher training discourses and power relationships is the nature of the conventions of certain practice. This is especially apparent in feedback sessions. We need to consider whether trainees know the ‘rules of the game’ (Copland 2010, p.465) and whether they know how to play the game. The question of whether the trainees are aware of the prevailing discourses is crucial. So far I have discussed the fact that there are certain ways of doing and being in ELT and ELT training, but the extent to which trainers and trainees are aware is significant. I would argue that rather than representing the trainee as passive to the prevailing discourses, many are aware of roles, power relations and the discourses, and that they attempt to work within them in their pre-service context.

Thus, I openly recognise my authority and responsibility ‘given the inescapably asymmetric nature of the researcher-researched relationship’ between the trainer and trainee (Clarke 2008, p.61). I also recognise the culturally and linguistically imperialistic arguments there may be for me as a native speaker of English, training NNS trainees in English to teach English to NNS students. This in itself is a contentious subject and has been much discussed in the literature (Pennycook 1994, 1998, Phillipson 1992). However, as Rajagopalan (1999) points out, the force with which the cultural and linguistic imperialism argument has grown in recent years is in fact creating another discourse. This new discourse puts the English language teacher in the position of guilty party. There are strong pragmatic and financial reasons why my trainees wanted to become English teachers and one could argue that it is the mastery of English that will give speakers an opportunity to better themselves (Honey 1997, cited by Modiano 2001). My trainees were typical examples of future English teachers who would be highly competent in English, while retaining their cultural and linguistic similarities with the students. My own role in this cultural and linguistic activity was sensitive, but not completely contentious (Rajagopalan 1999). Nevertheless, my role as a trainer, as a NS, as an embodiment of the prevailing ELT discourses was a part of my reflexivity which I refer to throughout this thesis.

2.5 Second language teacher education

In this section I contextualise my research within the literature on SLTE. I do this by giving a brief overview of SLTE approaches and content, and positioning SLTE in a socio-cultural

theory framework.

2.5.1 A brief overview of SLTE approaches

Until the 1990s the literature on SLTE was sparse (Richards and Nunan 1990). As the field grew, so did the literature which examined issues and practices in SLTE. Richards and Nunan (ibid) point to the fact that as teacher training moves more into a field of teacher education, practices and approaches need to be re-examined. In one of the first publications of this type, Richards and Nunan include articles on peer observation, supervisor observation, classroom dynamics and activities for teacher education. In the last 18 years, there has been an enormous growth in the literature and we are constantly exposed to new approaches and content bases of SLTE.

A variety of approaches are suggested for SLTE, from one end of the continuum of trainer as all-knower in the applied science model (Wallace 1991) to the teacher as investigator and reflective practitioner in an action research model (Allwright 2005, Wallace 1991). A possible middle ground in this continuum would be teacher as active participant in the loop input model (Woodward 1991, 2003). Despite the semantic differences, most of these models in fact include elements of reflection and investigation, still a strong element of all teacher training courses today.

Freeman and Johnson (1998) explain how an SLTE approach which focused more on the manipulation of discrete teaching skills moved towards a more constructive approach to teaching and learning. They plot the development of approaches focusing on discrete behaviours of the 'effective' teacher, to the area of teacher cognition, then to an emphasis on experiential learning and finally, the current stage of viewing learning to teach as a socially negotiated activity.

I observe that the patterns of movement between different approaches in SLTE mirror the movements in TESOL and TEFL. In the past, there was a focus on discrete language points, to a more communicative approach where the context was of utmost importance, to a slight backtrack in focusing on form again (Batstone 1994) and recently language learning in a socio-cultural theory (Lantolf and Thorne 2006, Zuengler and Miller 2006). In the same way that teaching has become more eclectic over the years, I see that SLTE has also become more flexible and context-driven (Bax 2003, Holliday 2005, Pennycook 1989, 1998).

This section paves the way for an introduction to the ways in which SLTE can be grounded in a Vygotskian framework of a socio-cultural theory of learning.

2.5.2 SLTE in a socio-cultural framework

In the last few years there have been a number of articles which investigate and describe teacher education in a socio-cultural framework (Eun 2008, Johnson 2006, Kaufman and Brooks 1996, Nyikos and Hashimoto 1997, Randall and Thornton 2001, Sheerer 1997). Vygotsky's theories have generally been applied to children and the role of adults and teachers, but there is support for applying his theories in scaffolding to adult learning also (Sheerer 1997).

I argue that a socio-cultural framework for learning is applicable to any learning environment, be it school children or adults. In all learning environments there needs to be a more able peer or teacher, who scaffolds and guides the learner. I argue that there are many principles of socio-cultural theory which apply to a pre-service training context (Bailey 2006).

The studies on SLTE in a Vygotskian framework focus on different areas of sociocultural theory. Some consider a mentor or teaching practice supervisor role in the context of SCT with particular reference to the role of dialogue in co-constructing meaning (Eun 2008, Randall and Thornton 2001). Others consider the role of artefacts or tools such as plans and videos in mediating teacher knowledge (Carroll 2005).

In a teaching practice context, examples of trainer scaffolding techniques might be modelling, contingency management, and feedback on lessons, instructions, questioning and cognitive structuring (Eun 2008). Through discussion with trainees scaffolding strategies may be: orchestrating tasks flexibly, invoking inquiry norms and processes responsively, recognizing critical ideas, maintaining an inquiry mode, revoicing and posing tasks and summarizing (Carroll 2005, p.465). Scaffolding can be provided by the trainer in the supervisory talk, or 'extended educational conversations' (Clarke 2008, p.95) they use with their trainees (Bailey 2006), the exact point I researched in this thesis. Despite the myriad of techniques, I also questioned which scaffolding techniques work in which contexts. No one size fits all as scaffolding is a 'special, sensitive kind of help' (Mercer 2000, p.140). Although these studies are important in that they have placed teacher training activities in a socio-cultural

framework, they have not considered specific examples of SCT such as the role of talk, or the role of the training context, which are at the core of a SCT framework.

What we seem to be looking at in the work above is a construct of scaffolding at different levels. There is what I would call micro-scaffolding at a linguistic level and macro-scaffolding at a level of training strategies. An example of the latter is feedback on lessons. How this feedback is conducted, and the questions asked would be an example of micro-scaffolding. What is missing from the research are actual examples of how these work in practice. There needs to be a critical examination of the macro and micro-scaffolding strategies and techniques. Such events do not automatically equate with construction of knowledge. Things can go wrong, there may be misunderstandings. Such strategies merely create potentials for scaffolding, or conditions for scaffolding.

Since my work is based on a socio-cultural theory, then the context of the training is a significant aspect in examining the scaffolding of knowledge construction. In the next section I shall discuss the contexts of teaching and training in terms of their influence and impact on the socio-cultural context of my training situation.

2.5.3 Teacher training contexts

As I mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, talk alone cannot scaffold. Socio-cultural theory recognises and valorises the social and cultural context of the learning. My research is concerned with an exploration of how contextual factors impact on the scaffolding of teaching knowledge through the training discourses. Such factors are the second language environment in which my trainees operate, the educational background of my trainees, the roles and responsibilities of my trainee teachers and my role as native English speaker trainer in a Turkish educational context. For this reason, in this section I will review the recent literature on issues which I believe to be relevant to the linguistic and social context of my study

To situate the training context of this research in relation to contexts worldwide, it is necessary to briefly summarise different conceptualisations of these contexts. The TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) world is varied, as are its purposes and aims (Holliday 2005). Similarly, the types of institutions we work in and the teachers we train are all very different, but ‘we are all involved in doing the same thing’ (ibid, p.2), and ultimately we have the same goals, be it teaching or training.

ELT / TESOL contexts can be divided politically in terms of Centre or Periphery (Canagarajah 1999, Phillipson 1992) or geographically, as in Western Anglophone teaching and training contexts, or professionally in terms of TESEP (Tertiary, secondary, primary) (Holliday 2005). The Western Anglophone teaching and training context is mostly NS teacher teaching a multilingual class in a language school in an English-speaking country, and is often the source of accepted teaching pedagogy (Bax 2003). However, TESEP in a non-English speaking country is in fact the teaching context for the majority of English teachers in the non-English speaking world. It is also the context of this research. The unequal power relations of native-English speaker (NS) trainer and non-native English (NNS) speaking trainees are mostly played out in conflicting Western Anglophone and non-Western TESEP situations. I shall be examining such discourses as I am a product of Western Anglophone teaching and training ideology, but training in a non-English speaking TESEP context.

2.5.4 Second language context

As stated earlier, the trainees were operating in a second language. English was the medium of instruction in their training, as well as the subject which they taught. Similarly, English was not only the mediating tool in the trainer – trainee talk, it was also a language that the trainees were still acquiring. This situation has several aspects that I believe need to be discussed to fully understand the trainees in their learning and training context.

Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that the trainees were processing at a content level and a linguistic level. My trainees were considered advanced L2 speakers. Despite the depth of research in SLA of language learners, there is little with reference to L2 trainees and the interaction between the L2 teacher learner and the English L1 tutor (Hyland and Lo 2006). One report which states at the outset that the language differential was a focus of the study, in fact concludes that any breakdowns in communication were the result of interpersonal reasons rather than linguistic reasons (ibid).

Secondly, as I stated earlier, although my trainees were considered advanced learners of English, they were still acquiring aspects of the language such as pragmatic competence. Interlanguage pragmatics focuses on understanding how learners ‘learn to get power / control and express negative feelings – but in appropriate ways’ (Beebee 1995, p.167, cited by Dippold 2009, p.1). My trainees not only had to articulate reflections and thoughts in a second

language, they also had to present themselves as professionals in the field. ELT training discourses represent a particular institutional discourse (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 2005) in which the trainees were participants. The institutional discourse of teacher training in Bilkent University shared similar attributes, similar structures, similar topics and similar roles as other institutional discourse with the same goals (ibid). Although the binary distinction of NS and NNS is not always fruitful, considering that NS trainees also have to be inculcated into the same discourses and use the same registers, my trainees sometimes lacked the communicative, linguistic and pragmatic competence to be a full and active participant in the learning conversations. Wajnryb (1998) researches how supervisors deliberately make their comments pragmatically ambivalent in feedback, complicating the task of the L2 trainee to process the input.

In some cases, there were linguistic and pragmatic barriers to the trainees being full participants of the learning and interaction in the training room and in feedback sessions. Although my research did not set out to examine the effects of operating in an L2 in the interactions, my data necessarily highlights some tensions (Copland 2010), which could be the result of such linguistic and pragmatic breakdowns.

2.6 Knowledge as a construct

As I stated in the introduction, the purpose of this research was to analyse how talk and context scaffolded trainees' co-construction of knowledge. In this section I will explain what is meant by knowledge in the context of teacher learning and within the context of my research on talk, scaffolding and knowledge construction. I will also explain how knowledge relates to beliefs and teacher cognition. This section briefly places my understanding and use of the term knowledge in the current debate about teaching knowledge. This includes a brief definition of knowledge and a brief discussion of types of knowledge. I also outline some relevant discussion of how teachers construct knowledge as this is relevant to my research context.

2.6.1 Types of knowledge

There is a plethora of terms to describe and deconstruct the term 'knowledge'. Some different types of knowledge which have been identified in the literature are: strategic, propositional, relational, craft, local, case, situated, tacit, personal, embodied, espoused (Fenstermacher

1994, p.6). Fenstermacher claims that these are different terms for perhaps some of the same concepts. He argues that when considering teaching knowledge we should be careful to distinguish between knowledge and belief, which are epistemologically different. He outlines six levels of knowledge which range from what he considers belief, to actual knowledge. Knowledge, he claims, requires fact or evidence, whereas belief can be merely expressed (ibid, p.40).

Two other terms which I find useful are ‘propositional knowledge’ and ‘procedural knowledge’ (Edwards and Mercer 1987). The former refers to knowledge about something, the ‘what’ of a topic; the latter refers to the ‘how’ of a topic. In teacher education contexts this would be the difference between knowing what the stages of an effective reading lesson are, and knowing how to teach a reading lesson.

Pedagogical content knowledge (Freeman 2002) is knowing the subject and knowing how to teach. This term goes some way to explaining knowledge about teaching, but still does not suggest the actual performance. As well as having ‘competence’, teachers also need to have ‘performance’ knowledge, i.e. ‘doing’ teaching as well as just describing how to teach. Despite the debate on types of knowledge, the reality is that teachers are assessed on their performance, both officially by tutors, and unofficially by learning outcomes. The performance aspect of knowledge is relevant in a teacher education context when we consider the fact that trainees are assessed on their ‘performance’ and the manifestation of teaching knowledge in the classroom.

Since my research is set in a training context, I believe it is necessary to briefly identify what I mean by knowledge. Following on from Alexander’s (2001) definition of pedagogy I use the term pedagogic knowledge to refer to knowledge about teaching, and also the act of teaching. I do not believe it is necessary to distinguish between subject matter, experiential, scientific or received knowledge because for the purposes of this thesis it is not relevant. I am concerned with how talk scaffolds knowledge relevant to teachers, which is any knowledge related to teaching.

2.6.2 Teacher cognition

Knowledge is also considered an element of teacher cognition, along with beliefs and thoughts (M. Borg 2001, S. Borg 2003). I will give a brief overview of teacher cognition to

place knowledge as a construct under the wider umbrella term of teacher cognition. Borg (2003) gives an overview of the many research projects carried out in this area in SLTE alone. He defines teacher cognition as what teachers know, believe and think. ‘Thinking’ and ‘believing’ would relate more to what Fenstermacher (1994) refers to as what teachers ‘express’, in other words, there is no evidence or proof, the thought is merely something expressed. The research on teacher cognition focuses on the relationship between cognition and espoused practice, and how one influences the other. There is significant research into what influences teacher thinking and beliefs (Cabaroğlu and Roberts 2000, Sendan and Roberts 1998) but this research does not consider the actual change in behaviour, i.e. the performance knowledge or practice knowledge.

As much as I recognise that beliefs can affect knowledge in that beliefs will affect openness to new knowledge, or how knowledge is interpreted, the topic of cognition goes beyond the research scope of this thesis. The real focus of this thesis is the relationship between trainer talk and knowledge construction, rather than the changes in teachers’ beliefs and perceptions.

Despite the great debate in defining the term ‘knowledge’ Calderhead, in 1987, presented his seminal work on how pre-service teachers learn how to teach. He did not define knowledge, or terms such as ‘learning’. His findings were that teachers and trainees need to speak a ‘common’ language (ibid), and I believe this point is highly relevant to this research, and the role of language in scaffolding knowledge construction.

2.6.3 The role of reflection in constructing knowledge

A central theme of teacher education is reflection. The focus of much work into how teachers construct knowledge has been the role and impact of reflection (Clarke 2008). Several studies into how teachers construct knowledge again highlight the role and importance of language. Research into how journals and diary writing scaffold learning is many (see Golombek and Johnson 2004, Johnson 2007, Marcos et al. 2008, Syh Jong 2007).

A major assumption is that ‘critical reflection can trigger a deeper understanding of teaching’ (Richards and Lockhart 1996, p.ix). The assumption is that by reflecting, the trainee questions, examines and makes decisions about teaching and the planning of teaching. By questioning their own beliefs and those of the trainer, the trainee can deconstruct and reconstruct their knowledge of teaching. The reflective process acts as a prompt, ‘disturbance’

(Vygotsky 1986) in the trainee's thinking. In the same way that scaffolding can take a variety of forms, so can reflection.

One form is through written reflection through activities such as diaries (cf. Mercer 2008). The common feature of the studies cited above is the use of journal writing as a dialogic activity, and the role of reflection and articulating the reflection as a catalyst for change. Syh Jong (2007) relates how writing as a preparation for talking about a topic helped clarify thoughts and issues 'because the talking and writing activities in collaborative groups helped students to construct meaningful knowledge' (p. 73). Others argue that the narrative inquiry is a tool which mediates teachers' professional development and through the narratives and dialogues in the journal, teachers externalize their knowledge and then re-internalize knowledge and concepts about teaching (Golombek and Johnson 2004, Johnson 2007).

However, the nature of the reflection is crucial to how it influences thinking and constructs knowledge. Marcos et al. (2008) argue that for the reflection to be dialogic there needs to be more than just description and narration of teaching, there needs to be explanations and conceptualizations. In other words, trainees need to be able to justify, respond to questions and defend their positions. They need also to be able to critically evaluate their teaching by questioning themselves and comparing their teaching with their own internal criteria, and other external criteria. Wertsch (1991) reminds us that conscious reflection is an important part of development within mediated action. This also refers to the notion of raising the trainees' awareness by comparing two situations; what happened and what could have happened. By engaging in reflection in dialogic form, the trainer and trainee also have to take responsibility for their judgements, and be answerable for them. They also have to listen and respect the thoughts of others (Clarke 2008). Such a process is referred to by Clarke as the 'ethical component' (ibid, p.59) of reflective dialogue.

Thus, for construction of teaching knowledge to take place, the reflection needs to be dialogic in nature, a structured, instructive conversation between the trainer and the trainee. In this way, then the reflection becomes deeper, and more likely to promote construction of knowledge. This research aims at examining this dialogic, structured and instructive conversation in a teacher training context.

2.7 Conclusion to Chapter 2 and research questions

In this chapter I aimed to provide a context in which I can refine my research questions. I have also built a case which positions my research questions in the current and relevant debates and I have identified how my work will add to the area of scaffolding in pre-service teacher training. I started out this research with the aim of examining the talk that takes place in the scaffolding of teacher knowledge. I have argued that the very essence of pedagogy must be an understanding of how the trainer, trainee and the context can influence the potentials for scaffolding. I had intended to study the appropriacy of scaffolding and its relationship to constructing knowledge. Although I do believe that this is still a valid question, I question my ability to judge whether construction of knowledge has taken place. Much of the research in this chapter has assumed that construction of knowledge is taking place. I believe that research to date has not exemplified enough the potentials and conditions for scaffolding. There may be many opportunities of missed or blocked scaffolding, and these are as important to study as neat examples of scaffolding. As a consequence of relevant readings and discussions, my research questions are:

Research question 1: What are the characteristics of scaffolding in trainer and trainee talk in a Turkish teacher training context with Turkish speaking English teacher trainees?

Research question 2: What is the relationship between scaffolding talk and the Turkish teacher training context with Turkish speaking English teacher trainees?

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will outline the methodological underpinnings of my research design. The methodology of the research describes the ‘plan of action’ which guides our use of methods (Creswell 2003). Since this research focused on the construction of knowledge, my research topic and the epistemology of this research were closely entwined (Thorne 2005). In this chapter I will describe my research paradigm and my methods. I will also describe my position as researcher and participant, and outline my research ethics. I will discuss the terms reliability and validity, and their alternative concepts with regard to my qualitative research. Finally, I will describe the procedures I took for data analysis and outline limitations of the research.

Throughout this thesis I faced the challenges of my central role as researcher, participant and data analyst. An important strategic and ethical issue was also my role as trainer to the research participants. Thus I had multiple roles and responsibilities in this research and reflexivity was a key issue throughout. Since I can not ‘pretend to escape subjectivity’, I can attempt to account for it by ‘showing the workings’ (Holliday 2002, p.47) and making my reflexivity as transparent as possible. To this end, I include excerpts from my research diary in which I articulate the thought processes going on at the time. I also share with the reader some of the fundamental issues and questions I was grappling with as I carried out my data gathering and analysis.

I began by examining the characteristics of scaffolding in trainee and trainer talk in a Turkish educational context and how contextual factors affected the construction of trainee knowledge. These questions guided the ‘act of enquiry’ which ‘unfolds through a “dialectic” of iteration, analysis, critique, reiteration, reanalysis’ (Schwandt 1998, p.243). I state in my diary as I examined my data:

‘There are too many interesting paths one could go down, you can read so many interesting issues into just a few lines. I have to keep reminding myself of the research questions I suppose’. (RD. 18.1.09)

My aim was to examine the construction of knowledge in a socio-cultural framework. As such, a qualitative research paradigm suited this need due to the fact it valorizes naturally

occurring data, as well as making the description and interpretation of social situations a central feature of its paradigm (Flick 2007).

3.2 A qualitative research paradigm

Within the literature on research design, there are a variety of definitions for naming the organisation of research methodology (Richards 2009). The epistemological and ontological positioning can be referred to as a 'strategy of inquiry' (Creswell 2003), 'paradigm' (Guba and Lincoln 1998, Cohen et al. 2000) 'model' (Silverman 2005) or 'approach' (Wellington 2000). I use the term paradigm to refer to the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of the study, 'a basic set of beliefs that guide action' (Denzin and Lincoln 1998, p.185). I find this definition useful as it suggests a clear guide, without restricting the possible research methodology.

This research is qualitative in that it explored and described naturally occurring data. Because of its emergent, fluid and flexible nature (Dornyei 2007), my research was rooted in the qualitative research tradition. Flick (2007) states:

'qualitative research uses text as empirical material, (instead of numbers), starts from the notion of the social construction of realities under study, is interested in the perspectives of participants, in everyday practices and everyday knowledge referring to the issue under study' (p.2).

Qualitative research has a 'range' (Hess-Biber and Leavy 2006) of theoretical and methodological opportunities but is characterized by its process-driven nature, focus on naturalistic settings (ibid), and its emergent and interpretative nature (Marshall and Rossman 2006). This research was carried out in the participants' natural, every-day context utilising techniques which were part of my and their every day work. The every-day interaction between me and the participants was a central part of my research.

I was interested in how trainees made sense of what they learn, how their knowledge was co-constructed through the talk the trainees and I used. I was also interested in what contextual factors affected this co-construction of knowledge. As a result, I found my research rooted in the constructivist / interpretivist paradigm, a sub-set of qualitative research (Flick 2007, Schwandt 1998) in that I was interpreting the trainees' world. I follow the social constructivist view that knowledge is created by individuals in a social context. One of my

tasks was enquiry and interpretation, since 'at base, all interpretive inquirers watch, listen, ask, record and examine' (Schwandt 1998, p.222).

3.2.1 Criticisms of qualitative research

One of the most common criticisms levelled against qualitative research in general is the lack of scientific methods and objectivity as defined in the positivist tradition and paradigm:

'Qualitative researchers are called journalists, or soft scientists. Their work is termed unscientific, or only exploratory, or entirely personal and full of bias. It is called criticism and not theory, or it is interpreted politically, as a disguised version of Marxism, or humanism' (Denzin and Lincoln 1998, p.7).

These criticisms reflect the desire in quantitative research for rigour, objectivity and reliability. In fact, the criticisms directed against qualitative research as described above are in fact the very features that qualitative researchers are proud to display. There are criticisms from both the positivists and the post-structuralists. Schwandt (1998) and Cohen et al. (2000) list some criticisms of qualitative research in a constructivist / interpretivist paradigm as the following. Firstly, there is the problem of lack of objectivity and criteria with which to evaluate the research. A second criticism is the inability of the researcher to critique the accounts they produce and thirdly, the danger of the 'halo' effect, which is that the data is carefully selected for presentation. There are also post-structuralist criticisms against qualitative research which is emic. One is that the interpreter is 'overly sovereign' as the sole writer and presenter of the research, and the other is the Hawthorne effect, the effect of the researcher on the participants' behaviour (Wellington 2000).

My counter-arguments against such criticisms are as follows. Firstly, in terms of criticisms which stem from a positivist paradigm, I clearly state my paradigm as emic, qualitative and in a constructivist / interpretivist paradigm. I make no claims as to the objectivity of my research, although I discuss in 3.5 and 3.6.1 how I account for possible prejudices. Secondly, I was to a certain extent interpreting my trainees' voices and re-presenting them in this research. This is inevitable in such a qualitative research using ethnographic techniques. If we take this argument to the extreme, there would be no ethnographic research reports, since all are representations. However, I acknowledge that my analysis and interpretations are representations, as are the transcripts. To counteract such a claim, I used member validation as an opportunity to check the transcripts, and I believe that even a representation is an opening

of the topic for further research and discussion. The research becomes a springboard for further work, not a factual account that claims to be the truth.

3.2.2 Practitioner research

I classify my study as containing features of practitioner research. Historically, according to the literature, practitioner or action research evolved for various reasons (Freeman 1996, Wallace 1991). One was the dissatisfaction in the educational practitioner community of the gap between researchers and practitioners. There seemed to be a distance between what was deemed theory and how this impacted on practice. Academics and writers presented ‘practitioner’ research as an alternative (Allwright 2005). This led to an increased interest in researching one’s own work, namely teaching.

The focus of practitioner research was on the theory which emanated from the teacher’s own practice at grass roots level (Cohen et al. 2000). Instead of the researchers being outsiders, it was believed that a more insider and emic perspective would generate more meaningful and credible data. It is the teacher’s voice which is the main focus (Freeman 1998) not the researcher’s. An important feature of action research and teacher research is the focus on change, through reflection (Ladkin 2004, Wallace 1991).

In the sense that I was the researcher and a participant, and given my role as participant observer, there was an element of practitioner research in my study. It was inevitable, given the tight relationship between the epistemology and methodology of this study, that there could be changes to my practice. Practitioner research, or action research, recognises three fundamental features which are integral to this research. Firstly, the biases and prejudices of the researcher are transparent. Secondly, the main intention of the researcher is to gain a better understanding of a particular context or topic. Thirdly, practitioner research centres on reflection (Ladkin 2004). In one fundamental way, however, my research differed from action research. The aims of my research were exploratory, not improvement. I believe that it is inevitable that there was and will be changes to my practice as a result of my research and working on a day to day basis with my data. However, my aim was to explore, not to improve my practice. This, I feel, distinguishes it from action research.

3.2.3 Case study

My research could also be classified as a case study. Case studies are in-depth studies of

‘many features of a few cases over duration of time’ (Neuman 2006, p.40). Case study is a detailed and focused examination of an organization, group, movement or event. Stake (2000) reminds us that case studies are not a method, but a subject of research. Thus, we can use any methods to study the case. However I have included a description of case study in the section on a qualitative paradigm as this is where traditionally case studies are set (Cohen et al. 2000, Wellington 2000). In this research, the subject of research was a cohort of trainees in a Turkish teacher training setting over one academic year.

Case studies, as with qualitative research in general, have been maligned in terms of their inability to generalize. Some argue that the particularity of a case study is its strength (Stake 2000). However, I argue that firstly, my case study was a means to an end; it was an instrumental case study (Silverman 2005, Stake 2000) in that the aim of the research was to provide an insight into an issue. Secondly, my case was of secondary interest and facilitated an examination and understanding of something else, in this case, trainer and trainee talk and its role in the scaffolding of teaching knowledge.

I have defined my study as practitioner research and case study for the reasons outline above, but I am careful to not to restrict my research by ‘naming it’. Shohamy (2004) warns against the restriction of having to fit into a mould or type by naming the research type. She argues ‘It has long been my conviction that the researcher’s only requirement is to develop a good argument that can be substantiated’ (p.729).

Thus my research was qualitative with features of practitioner research and case study. As I mentioned earlier, a strong characteristic of this research was my reflexivity, as the researcher and participant in the study. This brought great benefits, but also certain concerns which I needed to manage. I shall discuss these in 3.6.

3.3 Research procedures

Within a qualitative research paradigm there can be a range of procedures (Seale et al. 2004). In this section I will outline the procedures I took in carrying out my research. This involves a discussion of the participants, the settings and a justification for the methods I used.

3.3.1 The participants

I worked with a cohort of 28 trainees. My sampling procedure was purposive (Cohen et al. 2000) in that I purposefully selected the participants who will ‘best help the researcher understand the research problem and the research question’ (Cresswell 2003, p.185). The sample was also a convenience sample in that I worked closely with these trainees on a daily basis and had easy access to them.

All students had chosen Bilkent University for the various advantages outlined below. As part of the internship programme and teaching practice, all students taught in well-established private schools in Ankara, and some spent two weeks in prestigious schools in Istanbul. Also, nine students in this cohort spent two months in Iowa, USA as part of a Fulbright Internship programme (Bilkent University 2009). Since most of these students had chosen to be an English teacher, they had a very positive attitude to learning English and teaching English. They also had a very positive attitude towards English literature.

The participants were asked if they would be involved in the research and that it would involve video-recording session, audio-recording some of their feedback sessions, analysis of their self-evaluation forms and my running commentaries of their lessons. They were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix A). This consent form fulfilled the ethical considerations outlined in the British Educational Research Association guidelines (BERA 2004). Two of my trainees chose not to sign and return the consent form. Thus I was left with a cohort of 26 from the class of 28. Subsequently, I wanted to use two of their written assignments and asked them to sign an addendum to the original consent letter (see Appendix B). The two who had chosen not to give consent previously, gave their consent.

There was strong element of practicality in my choice of trainee data. As I was the teaching practice supervisor, I could not decide on which day I would observe and then audio record a certain trainee. Those who were assigned to me on a particular day were the trainees I audio-recorded. However, for the second phase of data collection, I audio-recorded the trainees with whom I had had feedback sessions in the first phase.

3.3.2 Settings

There were several sites used in this research. The first one was the Graduate School of Education. It is a private, English-medium University with a total of 12,000 students. The

University is well-established and particularly famous in Turkey for its science and engineering departments. Students choose to enter Bilkent University in the national University placement exam. Those who gain high grades in this placement exam study on full or partial scholarships (Bilkent University 2009).

The Graduate School of Education runs a variety of MA programmes, and one PhD programme (Bilkent University 2009). The benefits of a degree from Bilkent University are many. In Turkey it is well-known, the English proficiency of the graduates is high, and many of the courses involve some internship in industry. All courses, including all of the Graduate School of Education's courses, are in English.

The students enter the English Language and Literature department for 3.5 years, and then study in the Graduate School of Education for 1.5 years to gain an MA in English Teacher Education and Qualified Teacher Status. Students in the Graduate School of Education go into schools for School Experience and teaching practice courses consecutively with their theory courses in the University. As a result, students are able to integrate theory and practice from the first day of their training.

I had worked part-time for 6 years, and full-time for 2 years in the Graduate School of Education prior to carrying out my research. Thus, the site was familiar. In keeping with my University's ethical guidelines, I obtained written permission from the Director of the Graduate School of Education prior to the research (see Appendix C). Similarly, I obtained the approval of Bath University under section 21 of my Candidature Form when I submitted my research proposal.

Much has been written on the problems of gaining access to research sites, but I was privileged in that the entering and leaving of the site were not an issue. Finding participants was also not difficult as my final year English teacher trainees agreed and gave written consent to be a part of my research. I had worked with the trainees in my role of University instructor and school experience supervisor six months prior to the start of my research, and so I was a familiar face to the participants.

The second group of sites was the schools with which we worked for the practical courses School Experience II and Teaching Practice. These schools in fact represent one site as they

were all school settings in which our trainees carried out the same work. The schools represented the same site for each trainee, specifically their practice school. For School Experience II the trainees spent one day a week working in a local school, under the supervision of a mentor – an experienced teacher from the school. The trainees both taught and observed, and I carried out several observations with the trainees over the period of 12 weeks. This was followed by teaching practice, an intensive 6-week period where the trainees spent the whole time in schools. The schools were all Turkish schools in Ankara, with the exception of one school for Teaching Practice which was an international school in Ankara.

3.3.3 Ethnographic techniques

I must explain at the outset that this study was not ethnography, or even an ethnographic study. It was a qualitative study which employed certain techniques from ethnography. However, I do believe that this study featured the following ethnographic characteristics: my insider perspective, the centrality of my personal experience and the long term commitment to the research project and the participants (Angrosino 2007).

The central feature of ethnography which applies to this study is fieldwork (Atkinson et al. 2001). Although in earlier anthropological studies, the field was ‘foreign’ (ibid), it is now acknowledged that the ‘field’ can be close to home, or even home itself (ibid). My research site is home in that I had lived and worked with Turkish students and trainees for twenty years.

A significant characteristic of this study is the fact it is emic. The purpose was to learn from the participants, through the participants’ voices. ‘The concern is to catch the subjective meaning placed on situations by participants’ (Cohen et al. 2000, p.139). I was a relative insider, as a member of the teaching community, and as an instructor of the research participants. I was not a full insider, in that my status and nationality were different from the trainees. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) remind us that having some similar insider characteristics with our participants does not necessarily mean the researcher can truly understand the experience of the participants. I believe this is true to a certain extent.

However, the boundaries of insider and outsider are not static (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006) and may move according to the stage of the research, or the methods used. Thus, I believe that my familiarity with the trainees gave me some insider characteristics. Also, crucially, I was

carrying out my every day work with the trainees, as I would have regardless of the research. This relative emic perspective ‘looks for the patterns, themes, and regularities as they are perceived by the people who live in the community’ (Angrosino 2007, p.68). I, as an insider, participant and long-term member of the academic community was able to have such a perspective. Similarly, I was able to access and reflect the participants’ voices through my experience with them and their input into this research. There are both advantages and disadvantages of having an emic perspective, which I will consider in sections 3.6.1 and 3.6.2.

3.4 Methods of data collection

I used a variety of ethnographic techniques and other qualitative methods. In this section I will describe each method, with a discussion of its benefits and limitations. I started off considering the micro-interaction between myself and the trainees. As the research developed, I found myself studying the macro-scaffolding of the trainees, similar to Alexander’s (2000) ‘Five Cultures’ study in which he examined education and learning from a wide-lens perspective of culture and schools, as well as the minute-by-minute classroom interaction.

3.4.1 Observations and video-recordings

Observations are a commonly used ethnographic method. The advantages and disadvantages are well-documented (Cohen et al. 2000, Wellington 2000). In this research observations were crucial to gather ‘live’ data from naturally occurring social contexts (Cohen et al. 2007). I was able to observe and examine every day behaviour and talk in its whole social, physical and human context. Video recording allowed me to continue my work as a trainer without letting my research detract from my role in teaching and learning with my trainees. It also allowed me to observe as an outsider the interactions in class. By studying the video recording I was able to progressively focus my analysis.

I was in fact carrying out ‘indigenous fieldwork’ (Angrosino 2007, p.55) in that I was an active member of the core activities of the research group. Naturalistic observations involved me as researcher and participant working with the participants for a substantial period of time. Such a temporal advantage offered me the opportunity to gather a more holistic view of the context and workings of my participants.

Although there are many lists available for what to observe, and how to observe (Cohen et al.

2000, p.312-313), I was working actively with the participants so I had to video-record and subsequently watch my input sessions. To avoid complete subjectivity I transcribed the video sequences.

3.4.2 Post-lesson discussions and interviews

The feedback sessions immediately after the trainee had taught the lesson were a hybrid of interview and stimulated recall. The medium of instruction at Bilkent University is English. Therefore, all instruction, including teaching practice work, was in English. Turkish colleagues also used English at all times in classroom and training room interaction.

Verbal protocols, stimulated recall and think-aloud tasks are all examples of introspective methods. These methods are commonly used in research on language learning (Brown and Rodgers 2002, Faerch and Kasper 1987, Nunan 1992), and put the participant in the role of analyst (Brown and Rodgers 2002). The assumption is that humans are able to verbalize their internal thought processes (Dornyei 2007). Although Kasper (1998) defines verbal protocols as ‘oral records of thoughts provided by subjects when thinking aloud during or immediately after completing a task’ (ibid, p.358), stimulated recall, or retrospective study can be some time after the event. Some critics argue that such data is unreliable since there is a gap between the event and the reporting. Thus, my stimulated recall sessions took place either immediately after the event or the next day.

Feedback on the lesson could also be seen as an interview in the sense that it was a conversation with a specific purpose. It was also partially structured by the self-evaluation form (see Appendix D) and the trainer’s running commentary (see Appendix E) and summary sheet (see Appendix F), but at the same time produced ‘free-flowing text’ (Ryan and Bernard 2000) as the questions were open-ended. The aim was to elicit self-evaluation, self – reflection, thoughts and perceptions and to prompt reasoning behind actions and decisions taken in the classroom (Wellington 2000). The data that I collected from these feedback sessions were part of my every day work with the trainees.

The feedback session also allowed me to probe knowledge of teaching. The feedback session was semi-structured in that the trainee or I guided the interaction at different times. Although these interviews did not follow particular interview structures (Richards 2003) they nevertheless followed a specific pattern and chronology based on the running commentary. A

typical structure was firstly, a general evaluation described by the trainee. Secondly, the trainee described more specific aspects of the lesson, often based on the lesson plan. Thirdly, there was a chronological discussion of the lesson which was directed by me, and involved asking questions about certain actions and decisions. Finally, the trainee or I summed up and decided on overall strengths of the lesson, and targets and strategies for further teaching.

I also conducted informal interviews with colleagues and some students. These took the form of informal conversations, unstructured, but with the aim of clarifying some of the codes and concepts that were emerging from the data. The interviews were loosely structured, open-ended, friendly conversations with different questions to suit the interviewee (Neuman 2006, p.407). I took notes and in two cases audio recorded the interview.

The feedback sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed by me for several reasons. One was that it was impossible and highly impractical for me to take notes whilst engaging in the feedback session. My interaction and talk was central to this research, so it was essential to capture this. Secondly, the recordings aimed to address issues of reliability and validity of data. Thirdly, these transcriptions were used for member-checking. Finally, the transcription made the data more reliable as it was a more accurate account of the interaction than basing it on memory. I transcribed a total of 23 post-lesson feedback sessions ranging from 20 minutes to 40 minutes.

I had a higher authoritative status from the students. I had to be aware of this in my feedback sessions. The discussions of the lesson were directed and guided by me, in my role of trainer. There was not equal opportunity to ask questions or initiate the discussion. Although I was aware of this, I also believe that my role was to guide and direct, and I also believe that this role fulfilled the trainees' expectations of such an interaction (Hyland and Lo 2006). Nevertheless, this unequal power relationship meant that I needed to be reflexive in my accounts.

3.4.3 Document analysis

Document research has many advantages. One is that it can be unobtrusive and non-invasive if used in a way that does not intrude on the time and privacy of the participant (Wellington 2000). The documents which I used as data were running commentaries, self-evaluation reports of lessons and assignments (see Appendix G). The documents were not written with

the intention of being research data, but formed the natural part of the trainees' school experience portfolio.

Documents are considered secondary sources (Wellington 2000) which means that in conjunction with primary sources such as observation, they can provide further understanding and interpretation. However, I would argue that the insights I gained from the above documents meant that they were just as much the 'life blood' (Cohen et al. 2000, p.161) of my data as the observations and transcripts. The documents from the trainees' portfolio were not considered closed, but restricted. All lecturers in the department, as well as the mentors with whom they were working with in the school had access to these documents.

The documents such as self-evaluation and assignments enabled me to see the learning process through the eyes of my participants in their actual words and language. These words were also the result of their thought process and thus gave me an insight into their concerns and constructs in teaching (Creswell 2003).

3.4.4 Respondent validation

To ensure respondent validation I gave the trainees a copy of their transcription and asked them to comment on it in any way they wanted. I waited until the end of the teaching practice course to do this for several reasons. Firstly, I felt that by studying the transcript, it may affect their natural behaviour in subsequent feedback sessions. Secondly, since this was a graded course, I did not want the transcript to affect their teaching performance in any way. As a result, there was some time gap between the actual event and the checking. However, I believe that to remain faithful to my ethics and to avoid jeopardising the trainees' performance in any way, this was the only course I could take. I wanted to ensure representation and trainee perspective, but this was not a complete safeguard of trainer gloss on the analysis and interpretation. I was conscious of this and noted as such in my research diary:

‘I also sent out transcripts and asked for general comments... It's so hard to get useful data without leading the students, although I do wonder why I can't just ask the trainees how they construct teaching knowledge. I am doing everything else to find out without actually asking the trainees'. (R.D. 3.5.09)¹

This entry also points to my frustrations in the respondent validation procedure of not leading the trainees so that I could obtain an honest and unbiased account.

3.4.5 Research diary

A diary provides an insight into my own experiences of carrying out the research and my coding, analysis and interpretations. The diary represents my internal dialogue with the research process. ‘Personal agency is an important part of qualitative inquiries and the ‘meta-data’ generated by the researcher offer valuable insights into the project’ (Dornyei 2007, p.160).

At the beginning of the research, my plan was to keep both a research log and a diary. The log was to note activities, places, and any particular comments. The diary was to report decisions made and the thinking process on methodology, hunches and notes (Silverman 2005).

Although this was the case, I found that the diary also became an emotional support. I made 40 diary entries between September 2008 and December 2009. The emotional aspect of carrying out research is little noted in the literature (Borg 2001), yet the emotions can affect the research process and progress. The research diary became a repository of thoughts and reflections of the research experience and added validity to my data. By articulating thoughts, I could contextualise better the decisions being made. The diary recordings served as an anchor to further reflections (Gerstl-Pepin and Patrizio 2009).

3.4.6 Transcriptions

There has been considerable discussion on how to transcribe, and what to transcribe in terms of content and conventions to use (Kasper 1998, Lapadat 2000). Some authors state that transcribing is itself a political and social act, re-presenting the words of the participant (Block 2000, Green et al. 1997, Roberts 1997). Block questions whether interview data is a representation of real events or a presentation of the individuals speaking. He asks to what extent the interviewer influences the outcomes, and how the interviewer and interviewee are positioning themselves in the interaction (ibid).

While I understand such concerns, I felt that my main purpose was to write down as accurately as possible the talk between myself and my trainees. ‘Talk is an observable behaviour and the researcher’s task is to write it down completely and accurately’ (Lapadat 2000, p.207). My purpose was not a linguistic exercise which follows the conventions laid out by conversational analysis, including information on pauses, overlapping and silences. My aim was to represent what the speakers said in terms of the words they used. I also wanted to

¹ RD – Research diary

make sure that my transcripts would be readable (Wolcott 1994). As Wolcott points out ‘Each level of detail implicates others requiring still more detail; there is no logical stopping place without a clear idea of purposes’ (p.67).

Since my purpose in this research was to discover how trainees constructed teaching knowledge, I was interested in the actual words being used in the interaction with trainer and trainee, but nevertheless I was aware of the aspects of the conversation that I was not including in my transcription. My transcriptions were defined as ‘verbatim’ (Rapley 2007).

I listened to the recordings and watched the DVDs of the sessions several times as my aim was one of discovery, rather than to establish or confirm a priori linguistic or social categories (Richards 2003). My concepts were ‘observer-identified’ (Lofland 1970, cited by Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p.211).

I transcribed all feedback sessions within a week of the audio-recording. As a result I could remember many aspects of the context. I therefore included information about what a speaker was referring to in term of documents. In the case of transcribing the video-taped sessions, I included contextual information such as what the power points were about, who was walking around the room, the trainee’s position in the classroom. Again, the data was the video-recording which I could check as many times as was necessary.

In this section I have set out the procedures I used in my data collection. In the next section I will discuss some of the philosophical and personal challenges that I faced during this research process.

3.5 Reflexivity in qualitative research

As stated earlier, although this research was not ethnography, I drew on the literature on ethnography to fully explore the issues relating to my reflexivity and the aspects of my role about which I should be explicit. The ‘I’ in this research was central. I was researcher, and research participant. Fetterman (1998) sums up the sensitive and crucial role of the ethnographic researcher and the ‘I’:

‘The ethnographer is a human instrument. With a research problem, a theory of social interaction or behaviour, and a variety of conceptual guidelines in mind, the

ethnographer strides into a culture of social situation to explore its terrain and to collect and analyse data. Relying on all its senses, thoughts, and feelings, the human instrument is a most sensitive and perceptive data gathering tool' (p.31).

Despite this centrality of the first person, Coffey (1999) states that the 'self' is not given enough emphasis in ethnographic work. She argues that writers describe feelings of 'nativeness', closeness with the researched, and the feelings of sadness when leaving the field. However, the role and the impact of the 'self' go deeper than this (ibid). Reflexivity is a crucial issue in such participatory research. Reflexivity requires 'explicit recognition of the fact that the social researcher, and the research act itself, are part and parcel of the social work under investigation' (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983, cited by Wellington 2000, p.234).

In order to be truly reflexive, at all stages I had to question my status, the positions that had been taken for granted, and my relevant past. I also had to question my motivations, my prior knowledge, and to what extent this would affect my roles as researcher and participant. I should critique the language I was using to talk about teaching, and my expectations of trainees. As a trainer I am constantly referring to 'good' practice, or 'strong' points in a teaching practice. I needed to explore the discourses I was using. I noticed this quite early on in my data analysis:

'One thing I do is to refer to our training sessions as examples of teaching, I refer to what I do and suggest that's a strategy they could use. There is a heavy push on my understanding of "good teaching". Lots to discuss there in terms of whose discourse, whose ideal of teaching' (RD. 11.1.09).

Fetterman's (1998) description of the researcher as a sensitive and perceptive data gathering tool suggests that as practitioner researchers we are always aware of this involvement. This awareness was an attribute that I needed to constantly refer to. I played various roles in this research as trainer to the research cohort, researcher, and as a result I was very much immersed in studying my own practices and work as well as those of the trainees. Thus, my judgements and vision may have been prejudiced.

Although I was not carrying out ethnography, my role was not so different from that of Canagarajah (1999) in his ethnographic study of perceptions and attitudes towards the discourse of English in a small Sri-Lankan community. He was working with his University students (as I was) in a periphery environment. One advantage of such a situation was gaining access to the participants and research setting. A second advantage was the fact he had

established a relationship of trust with the participants. Thirdly, he had appropriate and sufficient background information to overcome power differentials. I also benefitted from similar advantages.

Canagarajah also states the disadvantages, which I will come to in sections 3.5.1 and 3.5.2.

He sums up my feelings of privilege in terms of access in the following way:

‘While ethnographic / classroom observation keeps one detached from the study, participant observations enables closer involvement in the processes of schooling and community life, providing deeper insights into the participants’ orientations. For example, my daily interaction with the students in negotiating meanings through English and participating in the students’ successes and failures, with the attendant need to revise my own teaching strategies, provided a vantage point over their perspectives. Moreover, I enjoyed natural access to their daily work and activities, without having to flag my role as researcher’ (Canagarajah 1999, p.53-54).

As can be seen, both Canagarajah and I were extremely fortunate in our relationship with the students or trainees. Nevertheless, it was important for me to evaluate this relationship and be ethically-minded at all times. I do believe that it is important to remember that my presence and influence could also be considered a ‘resource’ in this research (Holliday 2002). What was ethically significant was how I managed this ‘self’ in the research process.

3.6 Research ethics

All research should adhere closely to ethical rules and this research is no exception. ‘Ethical considerations override all others’ (Wellington 2000, p.54). Considering my fragile and closely entwined role of researcher and observer, ethical issues were paramount. As mentioned above, I distributed a consent form and explained what data I would be collecting, and how I would go about this. Despite the threat of reactivity and the Hawthorne Effect, I believed that my participants have the right to be informed about the aims and purposes of my research (BERA 2004). I made it clear that they were under no pressure to participate, but there could be an argument that there was implicit coercion due to my role as ‘grade-giver’ in their courses, particularly teaching practice. This dual role already put me in a difficult position. As much as I considered my position as the ‘neutral’ researcher, this was clearly not the case and was an unrealistic goal (Wellington 2000). It was also undesirable (Holliday 2002), as to suddenly behave in a distanced, objective manner would undermine my work with the trainees, and would detract from their experience. My research was a significant part of my every day work in the University, working closely and daily alongside the research

participants. It was therefore crucial that I maintained my professionalism (Fetterman 1998) at all times. My research did not impinge on my work, or take from my time with my trainees. My research did not constitute extra work to the participants' or my every day activities.

In the consent letter I hedged the research topic slightly by stating the purpose was to study interaction between trainer and trainees. I specifically did not use the term 'language' or 'talk' since this could have worried some of the trainees, as English is their second language. I did not want them to think I would be evaluating their language. Although many writers suggest one is honest about the purpose of the research (Creswell 2003) I felt that the exact purpose here would affect their learning in the training context. We are also reminded that ethical concerns are not only relevant at the design stage of the research but at all stages of the research (ibid).

I endeavoured to follow the British Educational Research Association guidelines (BERA 2004) in the following ways. Firstly, I obtained voluntary informed consent before the research started making it clear that the participants could withdraw at any time. Secondly, I made my role of both their trainer and researcher clear at all times and I clarified in the letter how they would be involved in the research. Thirdly, I explained that the data would be confidential and the participants would be referred to only by the initial of their name. In fact, this was clarified further when they received their transcripts and saw that there were initials only on the document. Finally, I provided the participants with copies of the transcripts of the feedback and an audio copy of the feedback.

Nevertheless, there were two main ethical concerns which I was aware of and would like to briefly discuss in the next section. These are familiarity and status.

3.6.1 Familiarity and participation

Although familiarity with the research context and participants can seem like an advantage, it can also be a disadvantage, with the researcher becoming a 'prophet in their own country' (Wellington 2000). Hornberger (1994) sums up this conflict when she states:

'Being too familiar with the culture being researched may distort interpretation toward shared biases, whereas being too much the stranger inhibits an emic understanding altogether. Too much participation by the researcher may change the course of action of the culture, classroom, or event being studied, but too little participation may miss the course of action altogether' (p. 689).

I agree with Hornberger's sentiments to a certain extent, although I do believe that the insider, participant perspective gives a view of the participants' interpretations and voices that would be missing if the researcher were an outsider. From the quote above, it seems that the only place to be in the research context is between emic and etic. However, I believe a valuable input to the description and observations can only come from the emic perspective.

Although there are considerable advantages of being an insider, to account for possible prejudices and 'closed-mindedness' I asked for respondent validation from the transcripts. I also shared my data with colleagues who worked in the same department, and a colleague who was not an ELT instructor. These colleagues acted as 'critical friends' (Sowa 2009, p.1028). By doing this, I could maximize the strengths of the emic perspective, and minimize any weaknesses of such an approach. According to Flick (2007), this sharing of information is a feature of 'good' research practice.

In summary, my role of participant totally immersed in the social world of the trainees as a practitioner participant meant that it was difficult to de-familiarize my perspectives. As Canagarajah (1999: 54) states, being an insider does not necessarily mean that your understanding is correct. '...research is itself a form of social practice, and enjoys no immunity from or transcendence of the contextual realities governing any activity'.

3.6.2 Status of researcher

Another ethical concern of mine was the fact that although I was a participant, I did not share equal status with the participants. I was their university instructor responsible for grading their classes and teaching practice. Ultimately, I was a gate-keeper as to whether they passed or failed, thus gaining Qualified Teacher Status or not. This made my role contentious. On the one hand I ask for consent, participation and time, couched in terms that suggest they could refuse. On the other, I was ultimately the decision maker on their grades. I was aware of this at all times, and tried to keep the video-recording and audio-recording to a minimum, but at the same time allowing me to gather enough data on which to study. I recognise that my position was not in any way neutral. Although I was able to 'capitalize' (Holliday 2002, p.146) on my presence, I was aware of possible tensions caused by unequal status. I tried to counteract this by sharing feedback recordings and transcripts with trainees. I also had considerable experience working with this group prior to the research which gave a degree of

mutual understanding and familiarity. Nevertheless, as I read my feedback and lesson transcripts, I realised that I manifested my power and status in different ways. I mentioned this early on in my research diary:

‘My position – power. I withhold my important feedback until they have evaluated themselves. It is almost as if I am sitting on the real evaluation, and then I tell them after letting them sweat and flail around trying to guess what the trainer is thinking. Clearly the status is not equal, even the way I interrupt them, or the way they defer to the ‘expert’s’ ideas. Rarely do they argue with me or even disagree’. (R.D. 18.11.08)

‘Students say “you’re right” a lot, is that because they believe it, or because of my role and status?’ (R.D. 25.11.08)

I believe that the participants were not negatively affected by the research as their grades did not have any connection to the research. I was collecting naturally occurring data during a lesson or a feedback session that we would be having regardless of the research. Nevertheless, there was always the possibility of reactivity (Cohen et al. 2000) which I shall explain in 3.8. Although I used a video recorder so I could teach uninterrupted, the reality was that there was a video recorder in the room, which took the students' interest for the first few minutes. Secondly, I used a voice-recorder for my feedback sessions which again, could have prompted some reactivity. Although I explained this in the consent form, I always verbally asked permission to use the voice recorder before we started the feedback sessions, and offered them the chance to listen to the recording. Participants and I had a strong relationship, and after one particular videoed sessions, several articulated that they wanted to help me in any way they could with my research.

As well as my academic status, I also had different status from the students in that I am a native-speaker of English operating in English. These participants were operating in a second language. While this may be considered problematic, they were training to be English teachers. Their training and education classes were all in the medium of English. They had been studying in the medium of English for four years at university prior to this research. Also, I believe the fact they were operating in a second language to give the data another layer of description which I discuss in chapters 4 and 6. Nevertheless, there were possible linguistic and pragmatic tensions which I had to account for.

3.7 Validity and reliability

In terms of the lack of scientific rigour, one of the most common criticisms of qualitative research is that the criteria of validity and reliability are not addressed. Many writers have offered alternative criteria with which to judge and evaluate qualitative research. Instead of reliability Guba and Lincoln (1998) posit the terms trustworthiness, which includes credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. They also suggest authenticity, which includes fairness and educative authenticity. Silverman (2005) posits originality as a criterion, which can be judged from the tools and techniques, the use of data, outcomes, by-products and exploring the unknown and the unanticipated. Others suggest that reliability and generalizability are not key concepts in qualitative research (Creswell 2003).

Peräkylä (2004) suggests that validity concerns the credibility of the interpretations, and that when the reader sees the interpretations and analysis, ‘the phenomenon rings a bell’ (p.290). The aim of this research was not to reproduce, but to elicit that response described by Peräkylä, that is, create resonance with other trainers in similar contexts to my own. Although I do not believe that the analytical frames should be standardised, an explicit description is necessary. Frameworks emerge with the data, but I agree in principle with using standard terminology, although the irony is that in the literature on research, standardisation of terminology does not seem to be the case.

Dornyei (2007) posits that the main concerns of qualitative research are that the data is ‘insipid’, the quality of the researcher is under scrutiny, that the reports are often anecdotal, and that the analysis is based on just a few well-chosen examples. He sums up the problem of polarizing quantitative and qualitative research by stating that ‘the literature is characterized by a host of parallel or alternative views and very little consensus’ (p.49) and I suggest that the same is true for using criteria to evaluate the research.

Ultimately, I believe that we should be looking for rigour (Holliday 2002), and credibility (Dornyei 2007). These can be achieved by transparency at all times because ‘researchers are increasingly doing whatever they can to find out what they want to know’ (Holliday 2002, p. 731) and we should be expanding the boundaries of what is possible. Whatever the trajectory of the research, transparency and accountability are key criteria. For me this meant being honest at all times in the writing of the research, and being open about my role and influences.

As in the paradigm and methods chosen, the guidelines or criteria for evaluating are also not neutral. The criteria you chose to evaluate research suggest your values and define the discourse for ‘good’ research (Lazaraton 2003). However, it is not only the researcher that chooses the criteria to judge. It is in fact the research community who judge the research, and thus all stages of the research and the write-up are open to scrutiny. I accept the terms transparency, accountability and accessibility as the driving forces in the evaluation of this research. The reader needs to be able to see the trajectory taken by the researcher at all stages, and see the arguments for such a route. I also believe strongly that the data needs to be descriptive and thus accessible to the reader, to make his or her own generalizations. My research should offer ‘insights’ (Alexander 2001) to the reader, and the motivation to provide insights was a major driving force of the research.

To achieve validity, I used the following strategies. Firstly, I ensured triangulation of investigator and methods. Two colleagues looked at my work and expressed resonance or not – an ‘external auditor’ (Creswell 2003). Secondly, I used a variety of methods as outlined in section 3.4. Thirdly, I validated my transcripts with the participants, in the form of member-checking. Fourthly, throughout the writing of this research I endeavoured to clarify my bias at all stages. Fifthly, I spent a prolonged period of time with the trainees – one academic year. I had two distinct data-gathering sessions for the feedback data, as such suggesting temporal validity. Finally, I have been rigorous in describing my ‘workings’ to manage my presence and influences as a participant researcher (Holliday 2002). I have included references to my research diary in this chapter. I have also included discussions of the challenges I faced in carrying out this research.

In the next section I will discuss the procedures I followed for data analysis. This stage was not a separate stage, but ran parallel to the data gathering and the writing of the research. All research procedures and stages were interwoven.

3.8 The process of data analysis

According to Richards (2003) successful qualitative analysis is ‘artful, imaginative, flexible, methodical and scholarly’ (p. 269). This section will focus on how I carried out description and analysis, saving my interpretation for a later chapter. However, as I was reading through

and comprehending my data I found myself making interpretations (Wolcott 1994). A researcher will always have prejudices and beliefs based on experience and knowledge of the world and the process of description, analysis and interpretation naturally occur at the same time, through an inquisitive mind. How to separate the processes was a challenge I faced. I realised this as I started coding and write about it in my research diary:

‘I’ve a feeling that it’s not going to be OK. Where do you draw the line between description, analysis and interpretation? I want to do all three at the same time, but I don’t think that’s the way it should be done’. (R.D. 16.2.09)

I started reading through and analysing my data from the very first audio-recording of a feedback session. I transcribed each feedback session, which gave me the opportunity to listen to the participants and myself in a more objective way, and also gave me the chance to become familiar with my data. As I wrote in my research diary:

‘Listening to tapes of feedback sessions...I’m transcribing the tapes and listening to everything carefully, writing it all down and noticing how it’s going. I’m really listening carefully to my questions, but I’m starting to think it is not the questions, but the format, structure of the feedback’. (RD, 13.11.08)

I referred back continuously to the documents, the self-evaluation reports after the lessons and assignments to ensure I was representing the trainees’ voices. I read my research material without any pre-formed theories or codes, although I was aware that my experience and reading would have bearing on my perceptions, a situation I believe to natural and unavoidable (Kelle 2004).

I have had a strong presence in this research project being both the researcher and the participant; I felt it was crucial to address this balance by including trainee comments. This also supported my triangulation methods. After transcribing all the feedback sessions, I sent copies to the trainees involved and asked for their responses. I also gave each trainee a copy of the feedback recording. This was also to strengthen validity, and give optimum opportunity to hear the students' voices.

I was aware of my multiple roles and deep involvement in that I worked with the participants, generated the data, and analysed my own work. As such, I needed to be explicit about possible researcher reactivity. Reactivity usually refers to the participants behaving differently when under scrutiny (Cohen et al. 2000). However, in this case there was a great likelihood of me, the researcher as participant, behaving differently when my own practice was under scrutiny. I

realised this early on when I started analysing the lessons and feedback sessions:

‘Listening to tapes of feedback sessions...It’s making me very aware of how I behave and how I ask questions, the structure, the format, the way students respond, even how I interrupt or laugh’. (R.D. 13.11.08)

To try and offset this possibility I recorded all my feedback and input sessions, I transcribed these, I obtained trainees’ voices through different documents and I consulted with colleagues on my thoughts and analysis. I was aware that I, as a participant could be affected by observer effects (Angrosino 2007) and so looked for ways to minimize this. One caveat of this was that my behaviour and research process was a natural part of my work, and did not constitute anything out of the ordinary.

Several researchers have metaphors for the process of data analysis, from journeys with occasional rest stations (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995), to walking through forests (of data), searching for and making decisions about which path to take (Fetterman 1998). I agree that the process of data analysis was similar to choosing the right path, because at many stages I had to make decisions on what to select, what to ‘leave behind’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p.208). These decisions were made based on experience of teacher training, my knowledge of the context, and my research questions.

3.8.1 Analytical procedures

The process of data analysis was an iterative spiral (Richards 2003) with ‘progressive focusing’ (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995) and ‘filtering out’ units which can be used (Wellington 2000). My study started out with a particular interest in the words and language of the trainer and trainee. However, as I worked with my transcriptions, observed my trainees on a day-to-day basis, and studied videotapes and transcripts of input sessions, I realised that the scaffolding of trainee’s teaching knowledge went far beyond the talk in the training room.

I started by reading the transcripts of feedback sessions and input sessions and highlighted any interactions which seemed related to learning or scaffolding. I then re-read these transcripts and wrote key concepts in the margins of the papers. I also noted down thoughts and questions in a separate book. I used the software package Weft QDA (Weft QDA 2008) which was in the public domain. I wrote in the concepts emerging from the data along with the relevant text which supported such a concept. I used the programme as a data base to store, organise and retrieve my data. I was able to constantly refer back to codes as they

emerged, merge codes and delete any which could not be supported by data. Having established some possible codes, I referred to the self-evaluation and assignment documents for any cross-references of codes, as well as new ones.

Almost from the very beginning of the data familiarisation process, I felt there were two distinct areas emerging from the data. One was scaffolding at a micro-level, as seen in the talk between myself and trainee, and the other was scaffolding at a macro-level, at the level of context, culture and organisation.

As Hammersley and Atkinson (1996) state:

‘Ethnographic research should have a characteristic ‘funnel’ structure, being progressively focused over its course. Over time, the research problem needs to be developed or transformed, and eventually its scope is clarified and delimited, and its internal structure explored. In this sense, it is frequently well into the process of inquiry that one discovers what the research is really about; and not uncommonly it turns out to be about something rather different from the initial foreshadowed problems’ (p.206).

I then decided to broaden my focus and examine practices and structures beyond interaction and beyond the training room. I also realised that the place of teaching practice was significant in their cognitive processes on learning about teaching concepts. As I came to work with my data more deeply, I tried to describe the data that was emerging. As Neuman (2006) states ‘Qualitative explanations can be either highly unlikely or plausible. The researcher supplies supportive evidence to eliminate some theoretical explanations from consideration, and to increase the plausibility of others’ (p.459).

Such a process of making explanations and theories meant that some data was included and some was not. This is an inevitable part of qualitative data analysis, and my attempt in this research was to share insights. Therefore, in this section, I will outline my reasons behind some of the decisions I made, and how I coded and categorized my data from a variety of sources.

3.8.2 Coding and categorisation

I followed closely the suggestions laid out by Richards (2005) in terms of the steps I took which led to more progressive focusing over time.

The process of coding and categorizing began as soon as I started collecting and reading my data. I collected data in two periods (October – December 2008, and February – May 2009). The first stage was noticing general themes which were emerging from the data. By studying themes, I was able to make sense of the data, and to organise the data into ways that would be readable. ‘Concept formation is an integral part of data analysis and begins during data collection. Thus conceptualisation is one way that a qualitative researcher organises and makes sense of data’ (Neuman 2006, p.460).

I was constantly guided in the organisation of codes by the research questions. As a result of the initial data analysis and code formation, I was able to analyse more specifically the data I collected in the second period, with a constant reference to the initial codes that were set up. The emerging codes pointed me to a realisation that I would need to analyse the data in terms of micro-scaffolds and macro-scaffolds. This was reminiscent of the macro-structures and micro-activities of other research in educational contexts (Alexander 2001, Daniels 1995), and of the micro-interactions and the ‘designed-in’ macro scaffolding in classroom settings (Gibbons 2006, Hammond and Gibbons 2005, Sharpe 2006). Westgate and Hughes (1997) remind us that although most researchers, including themselves, look for the observable features of discourse and scaffolding, there are significant factors which scaffold construction of knowledge which ‘lie behind the talk rather than being visible in it’ (p.131).

During the second phase of data collection, I refined and compared my original codes and categories, using again my experience and work with the trainees to guide me. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) state that in comparing and organising codes. ‘...theoretical ideas, common-sense expectations and stereotypes often play a key role. Indeed, it is these that allow the analyst to pick out surprising, interesting and important features in the first place’ (p.213).

I was struck at the outset by how many interactions did not reveal any scaffolding at all. I realised that despite the potential for scaffolding, things went wrong. There were also examples of when things went right. Some examples of initial categories in the micro-scaffolding were missed opportunities, blocked opportunities, prompts, reference to documents and question types. These categories emerged from the trainer-trainee talk in feedback and sessions. This scaffolding represented the moment-by-moment interactions within the session or feedback session, also known as contingent scaffolding (Sharpe 2006).

Macro-scaffolding as a major code emerged early on with the realisation that there was also support for trainees at a planned, curriculum level, even an institutional level. This has also been referred to as ‘designed-in’ scaffolding which is defined in a classroom context as ‘overall design of the unit of work to achieve specific outcomes’ (ibid, p.213). Some early categories were: role of teaching practice, the discourses of ELT, and motivation. These codes emerged from feedback sessions, interviews and conversations with trainees, and also from my day-to-day interactions with the trainees in formal and less formal contexts.

As the analysis progressed, I was able to focus further. From the scaffolding examples that went well, I classified the different features of questions asked and analysed the responses they drew from the trainee. The significance of the question or prompt was the actual response from the trainee, and could not be analysed without looking at the entire exchange. Similarly, I analysed the different types of prompts, or hints similar to the scaffolding strategies found by Thompson (2009) in her analysis of a tutor’s scaffolding strategies in a Writing Center. Within the category of macro-scaffolding, the role and importance of practical work versus theoretical work became a strong category, as did the influence of dominant discourses and familiarity with the conventions of feedback sessions

The final stage was respondent validation from the transcripts, and peer validation in terms of codes and categories from the data. This external auditing enabled me to see my codes from a different perspective, and also to re-organise my initial framework to a more logical framework of trainer-initiated and trainee-initiated interaction. A summary of the data referred to in this thesis and the subsequent codes used can be seen in Appendix H.

3.9 Limitations of the research

In retrospect it is clearer which aspects of the study could be improved. This research could benefit from some changes in the following areas. Firstly, I could have included some stimulated recall with participants watching extracts of input sessions, and listening to extracts of feedback sessions. In fact, I was aware of how such an addition would enrich my data, but I was very conscious of the time burden this would put on my participants.

Secondly, I could have asked a colleague to record some feedback sessions which I could

have transcribed. This would have given me data that was not researcher-driven or focused, and as a result more neutral. However, I was aware of time constraints in colleagues' professional lives and was sensitive not to encroach on their work. Also, as in teaching, some trainers prefer to 'keep the door of the classroom closed' and may not have welcomed intrusion into their work.

Thirdly, the very specific context of Turkish pre-service teacher trainees could be regarded as a limitation. However, I believe that this specific NNS English teacher trainee is common in many parts of the world, and as a result, readers may find resonance with my data.

Finally, my dual role of researcher and participant made me conscious of the narcissistic air of my research. As such, I have endeavoured to be reflexive at all times, but I believe that I have also been honest in my role.

The value of this research, however, is not undermined by these limitations. The areas above are aspects of the research that could be adjusted in future directions of a similar topic.

3.10 Conclusion to Chapter 3

In this chapter I have outlined my research paradigm, data gathering methods and the data analysis procedures. My research was a qualitative one, exploring naturally occurring data in my work with trainees. I aimed to explore the trainees' experience of constructing teaching knowledge by examining the talk I and they used in every day training interactions, mostly input sessions and feedback sessions. To support this data, I also interviewed some of my colleagues, and analysed the trainees' reflection assignments. Finally, to go some way to ensuring that I had captured some elements of their learning experience, I asked the trainees to respond to their feedback transcripts.

In the next chapter I will present my analysis of my data based on the coding and categorising outlined in this chapter. There were two main themes in the data. One was that of micro-activities in terms of the talk. This is referred to as micro-scaffolding. The second was the macro-structure, which I refer to as macro-scaffolding. I have divided the following two analysis chapters according to these themes.

Chapter 4

Data analysis I: A micro-level examination of scaffolding

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2 I presented the case for why my research is based on a socio-cultural theory of learning. The main aspect of this theory relevant to my research is the notion of constructing knowledge through scaffolded interaction. Scaffolding in this research context refers to the guidance and support in the interactions between me as the trainer with my trainees over an academic year and in a variety of formal and informal contexts. The data pointed to micro and macro-scaffolding. This chapter is the first of two analysis chapters and presents data which emerged as related to micro-scaffolding.

The categories which emerged from the data were lack of opportunities for trainees to respond, tensions in feedback focus, trainee questions and justifications, questions and prompts, reference to documents or meditational means (Wertsch 1998) and contingency. The codes which follow the excerpts refer to the data source, which were feedback sessions (FS), input sessions (IS), respondent feedbacks (RF), research diary (RD), self-evaluation documents (SE), assignments (Ass) and interviews (Int) (See Appendix H for a summary).

I structure this chapter to reflect the main themes which emerged, concluding with the main focus of this thesis, that is, scaffolding. The organization of this and the subsequent analysis chapter reflects the themes which informed my understanding of scaffolding in this particular context. By structuring these chapters in this way, I hope to build a picture of striking features of scaffolding in this context and bring together themes which build a picture of the sensitive and contingent-dependent nature of scaffolding. The final section relates the various themes in a presentation of scaffolding and the differing ZPDs of trainees. I would like to clarify that the themes and categories emerged from the data. I did not use any a-priori concepts or frameworks. I did not try to fit my data into any other frameworks presented in the literature.

I have organised my findings into themes of ‘less or ‘more’ scaffolding. Although it is difficult to assume that scaffolding took place, my research was exploratory in nature and I believe I can state that in certain interactions the trainees were more or less able to reflect and construct knowledge from the interaction, and that the scaffolding was successful. However,

since my research was exploratory in nature, and set in a very specific context, I cannot claim to have superior insights into all successful scaffolding. As such, I will present my data in three main sections. The first section is less scaffolding. This includes interaction in which there was intention by me to scaffold, but for various reasons broke down. The second two sections are themes of more scaffolding.

Since micro-scaffolding necessarily refers to support given at an interactional level, the bulk of my data in this chapter comes from feedback sessions after teaching. However, there are examples of micro-scaffolding which resulted from the written interaction in the form of self-evaluations and respondent feedback. The latter data sources also go some way to representing my trainees' voices. Finally, my research diary provides an observational account of the micro-scaffolding.

4.2 Interactions in which there was little scaffolding.

In this section I will present interactions which revealed instances where scaffolding did not take place. Exchanges with trainees were not straightforward and problem-free. Scaffolding did not take place for various reasons such linguistic misunderstandings and lack of pragmatic awareness on the part of the trainee and me.

4.2.1 Lack of opportunity for trainees to respond

One of the scaffolding tools in feedback sessions was referring to the running commentary or to the lesson plan. How this tool was used as a scaffold was significant. In exchanges where there was more scaffolding I used the running commentary or lesson plan as a tool to support the verbal interaction, prompting reflection. I will present these in 4.4.2.

However there were instances when I used the running commentary as a tool with which to describe the lesson at length giving no opportunity to the trainee to respond. Wertsch (1998) points out that such manipulation of power is a 'misuse' of the mediational means. This informed my notion that the power and authority of the trainer are behind the tool and only the trainer can decide how the mediational means is used. I chose to use it in a way that suited my purposes at that moment and as a result the scaffolding was unsuccessful.

The following excerpt was a typical interaction. This monologue generally took place after I

had asked the trainee to reflect on her lesson, the third stage of the feedback session (see 3.4.2). The trainee had told the students that rice was made from grain. As I talked her through my notes, I commented on her mistake:

Excerpt 4.1: Rice and grain

T: Rice is made from grain, oh dear. Be careful, the students are confused now. So be careful. So new words. Ok again it's related to this, the pre-part, transitions, G. Work on transitions, so “we're going to read a story, before we read the story let's look at some key vocabulary”. Relate the parts. You did a warmer about money, what's it got to do with it? Then you say “we're going to do a story”. Then you say “you're going to do vocabulary”. It's jumbled, you need to make the transitions clear. How can students match if there's no context. A sentence would help, do you remember I said, yea. There's no context?
G: Uh huh. (FS 1)

This exchange reflects the lack of my perlocutionary awareness. In this exchange I mentioned vocabulary, transitions, giving a context for vocabulary all in the same monologue, without an opportunity for G to respond. The only response I elicited was an ‘uh huh’ at the end. Based on such an interaction, I did not know to what extent G firstly understood what I said, and secondly, whether she was cognitively engaging with what I explained. In short, my talk did not scaffold in this particular exchange. As stated in Chapter 2, Alexander’s (2004) notions of dialogic teaching and scaffolded dialogue require common understanding. However, in this excerpt no such understanding was achieved and there was no structured or cumulative questioning. I made no attempt to repair the situation as indeed I did not notice the lack of participation from the trainee. Another aspect of this exchange is the volume and depth of processing with which the trainee needed to engage. The trainee was operating in an L2, and as a result has to manage both the content and linguistic input. This load may have been too heavy in such long monologues and my scaffolding mis-fired.

Yes / No questions did not encourage reflection from the trainee and did not make for a dialogic interaction. The use of such questions was due to my need to cover a lot of ground in little time. These questions did not prompt deep cognitive processing or reflection of the lesson. When I asked such questions, the opportunity for the trainee to respond and extend the answer was minimal.

In the following extract I asked a series of closed questions to R, to which she could only agree or disagree:

Excerpt 4.2: Using the board

T: So maybe, when everyone's looked at their aim, you could give a handout with all of them on, or, have them written on the board, yea?

R: Yes.

T: Do you think that would have helped?

R: Yes, it would help, yes. (FS 2)

There was no opportunity for R to react in a personal way, or to process the input I was giving. In the following exchange which took place a few minutes later with the same trainee in the same feedback session I asked open-ended questions which prompted a much longer and more detailed answer:

Excerpt 4.3: Quiet students

T: There was quite nice response, there, then it got a bit quiet; they read the epigram, why do you think they were so quiet?

R: I don't know. Maybe it was the first time, my teaching, my first lesson (both T and R laugh) they may, they might be surprised to see me because I have never told them that I would be teaching. (ibid)

It was clear that there needed to be greater interaction with the trainee, utilising questions and prompts which gave the trainee an opportunity to respond and thus articulate his or her thoughts.

4.2.2 Tensions in feedback focus

Another area of scaffolding which I had not considered before my research was the scaffolding of language. My participants were operating in English as their second language. I had assumed that the content and aim of the feedback sessions was teaching knowledge. However, I was surprised by how much of the feedback session involved correction of language mistakes from the content of the lesson, from the trainee's own use during the lesson, or use of English in the feedback session. I was very focused on my role as teacher trainer, not English teacher. I was in a faculty position in an Education Department. I did correct language in assignments, and in lesson plans. However, language issues including clarifying and correcting seemed to be a substantial part of many of my feedback sessions. This preoccupation of language was also evident in the trainees' respondent validation comments. In some exchanges I believe that the sudden focus from teaching skills to language were appropriate since the trainees were teaching English as their subject. However, there were examples where I interrupted the reflection.

In fact, it would seem that there were examples of the trainer scaffolding language rather than teaching knowledge, and this caused tension in the feedback session. In the following exchange I commented on a typical mistake made by Turkish learners, that of confusing ‘nervous’ and ‘excited’, as they are the same word in Turkish, ‘heyacanli’:

Excerpt 4.4: Excited vs. nervous

T: Ok, let’s have a look at some of the things I wrote here, then, erm.

A: At the very beginning I was a bit excited, I don’t know why.

T: Excited or nervous?

A: Ya, (laughs) yes.

T: Which one?

A: Nervous.

T: Right, Ok.

A: I was a bit nervous and I couldn’t concentrate on my English, I made mistakes, I know.
(FS 3)

Several things were clear to me after reading this. One is that I corrected their language even though the main purpose of the discussion was not language improvement. Secondly, that it was not appropriate to correct in such an exchange as the focus was on the trainee reflecting. That in itself is a difficult activity, especially articulating reflection in a second language. In this exchange I was interrupting the flow of thought, rather than supporting it. Although the result may be scaffolding language, that was not the initial aim. I was not clear about the purpose of my talk, and the purpose of the dialogue.

In the following interaction the flow of the exchange was lost by my use of an unfamiliar lexical item:

Excerpt 4.5: Snappy pace

T: So keep the pace snappy.

N: Snappy, how do you spell it?

T: S-n-a-double p-y. Do you know what it means?

N: Snappy. Uh er (no) maybe quick?

T: Yea.

N: Ok. (FS 4)

There are several interpretations of the above exchange. On the one hand, I could argue that I should have used language familiar to the students since my main aim was to encourage reflection and discussion of the lesson. The use of this particular lexical item interrupted the

discussion and we focused on a different aspect of the lesson. This could have confused the trainee who was focused on the lesson. On the other hand, I could argue that my trainees were learning to be English teachers, English was the subject and medium of instruction and that English was their second language. Therefore, I had a role, as a native-speaker and as their lecturer, to help them develop their language proficiency. Similarly, the lexical item ‘snappy’ collocates with ‘pace’ which is a word and concept often in the teaching literature. Thus the trainee should be familiar with it.

There were misunderstandings caused by lack of pragmatic competence. I used questions to elicit further reflection, but the trainee seemed to interpret them as literal questions, requiring a yes or no response:

Excerpt 4.6: Timing

T: You’ve written 10 minutes to ask, to show pictures. You showed 2 pictures and asked 2 or 3 students, that’s not 10 minutes.

Z: Actually I expected students to speak more and a few of them just spoke, so it didn’t last.

T: No, not all, 3 minutes. Can’t you encourage them more to speak? You know, use their names.

Z: Yes.

T: And say Ok, have you ever been to the pyramids? No, would you like to go? No why, why not, you know nominate a few people, try and bring them into the discussion more.

Z: Yes, yes.

T: You asked one student, they answered then finished, and the next picture.

Z: Yes.

T: You had other questions here. Have you ever seen a famous person?

Z: Yes I asked that at the end of the lesson.

T: Yea, why?

Z: Because I had time

(FS 5)

The dialogue was not in any way pedagogic, there was no scaffolding at all. Alexander’s (2004) criteria of scaffolded dialogue, as outlined in Chapter 2, were not fulfilled in this instructional conversation. The trainee was unable or unwilling to expand on answers as I believe she interpreted my questions as closed questions, and was just checking her understanding. Her responses suggested that she was merely following the conversation, but not interacting with it or constructing her knowledge of teaching. The trainee did not seem to understand the illocutionary force of the questions, which was to expand and reflect. To make my intentions clearer, I should have asked open questions. I also felt that this trainee was not

able to represent herself in the dialogue at all. She either did not have the linguistic or the pragmatic resources to do this. In this exchange, I was not able to scaffold the trainee. I would also argue that I was being pragmatically ambivalent by assuming the trainee could reflect from a closed question.

My concern with language was evident in many of my comments made in my running commentary:

Excerpt 4.7: Trainer comments

- ‘ “The others” – do you mean “anyone else”?’ (25.11.08)
- ‘ “Could you tell me what did you do” – careful’. (16.12.08)
- ‘ “When have you seen her?” – is this OK?’ (16.12.08)

The above are some of the examples in my running commentary. My response to the errors seemed to be awareness-raising in the sense that I asked a question about the language, the aim being to prompt the trainee. In the same way that I used questions in the feedback session or the input session, I also used questions in the running commentary, in the spirit of raising awareness and reflection. In many of the running commentaries I referred to grammar, lexical and phonological errors and then brought them up in the feedback. I presented the language error to the trainee, and expected them to comment and be able to correct themselves. As was seen earlier in the feedback session, this sometimes caused confusion and interrupted the focus of the dialogue. Such confusion of aims produced tension rather than scaffolding.

Trainees’ concern with language was evident in their self-evaluations. These evaluations were usually written or amended after the feedback session. I had naively assumed that the act of teaching would be the main focus of their reflection, but although my language comments were not the main aim of the feedback, this was the point that many focused on after the feedback:

Excerpt 4.8: Bad language

‘However, I was very bad in terms of using my language. I mean I should have spoken with correct pronunciation and I should have been much more careful especially while giving instructions’. (SE 1).

This trainee left the feedback session with the idea that language was her main area to

improve, when in fact there were many other aspects to focus on. This showed a certain tension in the aims of the feedback session, and the expectations and concerns of the trainees. The tensions arose out of the unclear aim of the feedback session and the multiple foci in the dialogue.

In this section I have highlighted the complexities in the interaction between the trainees and myself. My data revealed that examining scaffolding in such a context was not straight forward. There were many instances of misunderstandings and communication breakdowns. Although I had initially intended to explore what appropriate scaffolding was, I realised that I was not in a position to make such an evaluation. There may have been scaffolding, but due to the inappropriate closed questions I used, or inappropriate language, the trainees were not given an opportunity to verbalise their procedural or principled knowledge. I could make some assumptions about their thinking process from their responses, but these were tentative ones. I came to the conclusion that exploring the intention to scaffold and how it can go wrong is a useful academic exercise in itself and would contribute to our knowledge of scaffolding in a training context. To this end, in the next section I present cases in which I believe the trainee or I were able to scaffold to some extent the construction of teaching knowledge. I have divided up these sections into trainee-initiated and trainer-initiated interaction.

4.3 Trainee-initiated exchanges

The data revealed that in the majority of exchanges in feedback, I initiated most of the interaction and asked nearly all the questions. This was not surprising, considering that I had a different status from the trainees, and that the trainees expected me to guide the interaction. Despite this unequal relationship and expectations, there were some instances of trainee-initiated exchanges. These were mostly questions to me, but there were also instances of trainees suggesting their own topic of discussion, and also justifying their actions. I found this significant in terms of scaffolding as it suggests that the trainees were confident enough to initiate, justify and therefore be active in their scaffolding of teaching knowledge.

4.3.1 Trainee questions

In this section I will present data where the trainee revealed his or her active listening and processing of the input by asking questions. As I mention above, it was unusual in the data to

find trainee-initiated questions. Therefore, I believe it is important to present such interactions as a window into trainee-initiated scaffolding.

Questions reveal thinking, so questions from the trainee to me suggested deep processing of the feedback input and an attempt to personalise and make meaningful this input and knowledge. Such questioning also suggested that the trainee was taking an active role in the feedback session, and saw the session as a joint meaning-making interaction. Trainee-initiated questions can suggest that the trainee is listening and fitting the input into his / her already existing schemata.

In the excerpt below, the trainee and I were discussing how the trainee could have used the overhead projector more to focus the students and give a visual support. A asked questions about my ideas. Although this may not seem unusual, I found few instances where the trainees took up my comments and elaborated on them with questions:

Excerpt 4.9: Visual support

T: If you are using an OHT, cover half of it, like you did.

A: For which one? For paragraph?

T: Yea, instead of putting information up, cover half of it, like you did with this one.

A: Mmm.

T: Yea? If you're using the OHP (overhead projector).

A: Can I do it for this one? (refers to another transparency that she used in the lesson).

T: Why not, cover it; say "I live in Paris, what is it"?

A: Yes. (FS 3)

In this exchange, the trainee asked a follow up question, to clarify the input for herself, and to relate the suggestion to her own teaching. In this way she was able to fit the new input into her already existing schemata. Asking clarification questions suggested that she was cognitively interacting with the input and thus an environment of trainee-initiated dialogue was being established (Alexander 2004).

Questions in which the trainee clarified his/her understanding of a point by suggesting the 'term' to describe the notion revealed a different type of scaffolding. This discussion of terminology suggested that the trainee was fitting the new knowledge with their own understanding of the concept, and 'naming' it further defined the concept for them.

In the following excerpt, El and I discussed classroom management. El suggested a term for

keeping an eye on the students at all times. This concept was based on a term she had learned in her classroom management classes:

Excerpt 4.10: 'Withitness'

T: Yes, don't get tied to one student, it's really difficult I know but talk to them and at the sometime, try to, from time to time look up and say 'are you on task?'.

El: Can we call it as 'withitness'?

T: 'Withitness', definitely. I call it scanning.

El: Eyes in your back.

(FS 6)

El related the input to her own concept map, and wanted to label the concept. It seemed that this scaffolded her understanding and then she would be able to internalise it as she already had the prior knowledge. This was part of the construction of knowledge which was scaffolded by making new knowledge meaningful through real, experienced and observed examples of the concept.

4.3.2 Trainee justifications

In this section I will describe data that revealed justification as a form of trainee-initiated interaction. Mercer (1995) argues that knowledge needs to be made more accountable. Justifying actions and decisions suggest this accountability and are an important part of deeper reflection. In such trainee justifications, there is reasoning and an awareness of this need for accountable knowledge. Although justifying was not trainee-initiated interaction in terms of its form i.e. as a question, I believe that it was trainee-initiated in terms of function. In these examples, trainees were not specifically asked to justify, but took it upon themselves to defend their decision. Justifying actions involves talking about teaching and this is one way of displaying knowledge. When a trainee was able to follow a trainer's comment with a justification of their teaching behaviour, the trainee is narrating and explaining his or her actions, a part of the reflection process.

In the following excerpt, O and I discussed the use of praise in the classroom. This had been hotly debated in a classroom management course taught by a colleague. The discussion was about whether O could have praised more or less in the lesson he had just taught. He justified his position:

Excerpt 4.11: Praise and encouragement

O: But yes I agree with D (the lecturer for the classroom management course) because I see now the negative consequences of giving praise actually.

T: If it's overdone, yes, but sometimes it's necessary.

O: For this [inaudible] situation maybe we can use praise because I am teaching only one or two.

T: Yea, yea.

O: So it not [inaudible] effect, but if I am the teacher of this class permanently, then they will understand my pattern and maybe they don't care the activities as well, the benefit from activities, they will not see that, just to reach or get the praise.

(FS 7)

In this extract, O justified his behaviour with reference to encouragement and praising, and his beliefs. He extrapolated from the input on a course and articulated his understanding, beliefs and also what actions he would take with his own class. He clearly explained his beliefs, and was able to apply these beliefs and knowledge to his future role as full-time teacher. O justified his actions to the trainer. This revealed an understanding of teaching that may not have been articulated without a need to defend actions.

Trainee justification of their actions may not always be explicitly a justification or a defence. Trainees' articulation of their strengths and weaknesses is a hybrid of reflection and justification. I attempted to encourage this at the end of the feedback session, so that trainees could articulate what they had learned and reflected on. I made this point in my diary:

Excerpt 4.12: Articulation

'I try to get them to articulate what they have learned, so that works well when they summarise the lesson'. (RD 13.11.08)

Articulation of strengths and weaknesses summarised the trainee's position on their teaching and clarified any misunderstandings from the feedback and the dialogue. Justifying one's position with some disagreement was a form of defending actions. Trainees did not outrightly disagree with me, for reasons I discussed in 2.4.2. However, implicit disagreements were a form of justification and represented an inner dialogue with my feedback and their own reflection. Thus my feedback prompted a response which was articulated in their self-evaluation:

Excerpt 4.13: Personalisation

‘I couldn’t personalise the subject. I realised this after Marion’s feedback. On the other hand, students looked very interested’. (SE 2).

At the outset, this seemed like a typical self-evaluation where the trainee mentions my points from the discussion. But on careful reading, this trainee has taken my point and compared it to his own observations and experiences of the lesson and in fact responded to my criticism.

This trainee was in fact disagreeing with me based on his observations as the teacher of the lesson. He reflected that the students looked interested, so perhaps it was not significant that he had not personalised the subject. I believe that my prompt had scaffolded his understanding of this aspect of teaching by defending his position.

In this section I have presented some examples of trainee-initiated interaction. The vast majority of exchanges were trainer-initiated, but there were instances of trainee-interaction in which they asked questions, clarified the input or feedback, or justified their actions, behaviours and choices. In doing so, the trainees revealed a deep interaction with the input from the feedback session.

4.4 Trainer-initiated exchanges

In this section I will present and describe data which were examples of some scaffolding in trainer-initiated exchanges. I have classified these exchanges into scaffolding based on questions, description and through physical artefacts such as documents.

4.4.1 Questions

In the following section I will present scaffolding which took the form of questions. These questions elicited a response from the trainee. As I stated earlier, I cannot assume that learning was taking place. However, based on the responses trainees made to certain questions, I can suggest that some cognitive interaction with the content, reflection, and knowledge construction was taking place.

From my data, it seemed that questions can frame and guide the reflection process of the trainee. One trainee, D, wrote in her respondent validation, on reading her feedback transcripts:

Excerpt 4.14: Questions

‘I was revising the lesson in my mind in the frame of your questions, and I could reflect on my teaching performance as to my weak and strong points’.
(RF 1)

Structured questioning is a feature of dialogic teaching (Alexander 2004). As the trainee explained, the questions served as a catalyst for thinking, reflecting and talking about teaching. She viewed the questions as a scaffold or a ‘frame’ which supported her reflection. Recall questions were a common feature of the interaction. Although recall questions are at the low end of Bloom’s taxonomy of cognitive functioning (Bloom 1956), by asking such questions, I could elicit articulation of the trainees’ understanding of an event or issue on which I could base further discussion. This was either based on events in the training room, or in the lesson the trainee had taught earlier.

In the following excerpt, a group of three trainees had just finished a 15 minute micro-teaching session based on teaching a poem which they had presented to the other trainees in the training room. I asked recall questions to ensure that the observing trainees and I shared an understanding of the topic and procedures of the micro-teaching so that we could all give constructive feedback to the micro-teaching group:

Excerpt 4.15: Micro-teaching

T: What else did we do? As a pre (task), before we read the poem? What else? Yes R?
R: She [a trainee] gave us the first and last lines of the poem in order for us to think what the poem is about?
T: Exactly, so we did some predicting based on the first and last time and because she put the list on the board we could easily refer to it couldn't we?
(IS 1)

In the above exchange, the trainee R articulated her understanding of one stage of the micro-teaching in response to my recall questions. In this way I could check that the trainees perceived the activities in the way they were intended. Mercer (1995) refers to such effective teacher talk as direct and cued elicitation so that the teacher and class can ‘own’ (p.25) the current knowledge. This led me to analyze my talk in terms of convergence of opinion through articulating the sequence of events and aims. My talk ensured that there was convergence of opinion and perception of the lesson observed. Such questions can promote group orientation to the input, so that learners can build up knowledge from the ensuing dialogue. Recall questions in a trainer-fronted classroom can encourage such group

orientation.

Recalling events by questioning the trainee on what happened in a lesson can prompt the trainee to reflect on what they did and how they did it. A shared understanding of the event paves the way for a more detailed and convergent analysis of the teaching event. In the excerpts below there was evidence that trainees had different recollections of their lesson. However, I had a written copy of the notes I had taken of the lesson in real time.

In the following exchange taken from a feedback session, I had observed that first C had put the students in groups, and then gave the instructions, by which time no one was listening to her. I wanted her to realise this herself and articulate it:

Excerpt 4.16: Setting up group work

T: That worked well here, the instructions for the group work this is a very good class because it's an IB class but, in a regular high school class you'd have many more students and there'd be a lot more noise so, do you remember how you gave instructions? For this group activity?

C: Yes.

T: What was the sequence?

C: I said that now we will work in groups and I would like to you form 4 groups 8 and we will I give you the analysis and the vocabulary related with for each line and you will read the analysis of the poem you and you will understand the analysis and you will explain it to your friends with your own words.

I first asked the recall question and the trainee repeated her instructions. This then opened up the opportunity for me to suggest an alternative:

T: Ok, great, now it would be more useful to put them physically in the groups after you've given the instructions, because when you said you will form 4 groups, you together.

C: Ah yes, first I formed the groups, yes I forget that.

Based on our shared understanding of events, I could encourage the trainee to reflect and think about a different way of giving her instructions. C was able to hypothesise and speculate about an alternative sequence and justify her ideas:

T: So what would have been more appropriate do you think?

C: First giving instructions and then forming the groups.

T: Why?

C: Because when they form the groups they cannot concentrate on my instructions.

(FS 8)

I am aware that this excerpt could be alternatively interpreted as an example of me asking the trainee to articulate my preferred model of teaching. However, I believe that such exhortation, the linking of the past to the present, enabled me to share the perspective of the trainee, and similarly, for the trainee to share my perspective through the guided questions.

Recalling events can be a strong reference tool when the trainee's espoused practice differs from his or her actual practice. For example, a trainee may explain that they believe in pairwork in the classroom but may never actually organise pair work activities in their own classroom. In order for the trainee to reflect, the trainee first needs to be aware of what he or she actually does in the classroom. This then becomes reflection-on-action. By encouraging the trainee to recall such events, I prompted them to reflect on their lesson with more clarity. I encouraged the trainees to recall what they did rather than what they thought they did.

4.4.2 Reference to documents

In the same way that recall of actual events was made more concrete by referring to what the trainee did, recall of actual events with reference to documents also anchored the discussion and reflection in the shared contextual understanding. Hammond and Gibbons (2005) refer to such documents as meditational texts which result in talk 'around' (p.17) them. As Wertsch (1998) points out, meditational means such as documents as tools are powerless until they are used in a certain way by the agent, or trainer in this context. Some evidence for this can be seen in the exchanges where I refer the trainee to the written document of the lesson. This reference was to documents such as the running commentary which I wrote during the lesson, and the trainee's lesson plan. By referring to these documents, the trainees were able to talk about their lesson in concrete terms, and the following step of articulating what the problem was, or how they might do something differently, was made more accessible. I wrote in my diary as I was reading my data:

Excerpt 4.17: Documents as guides

‘Clearly the plan is an excellent prompter and guide for reflection as is my running commentary. I’ve noticed that points from our feedback go into their self-evaluation and targets. Does that mean they have internalised it?’ (RD 18.11.08)

There are several points here. Firstly, I realised that the dialogue was supported by the use of documents for the reasons mentioned above. Secondly, I highlighted another possible tension

in studying scaffolding. Trainees include points from feedback sessions in their assignments and self-evaluations, but this does not necessarily mean that they have understood and constructed knowledge. There may be several factors influencing their internalisation. One is the power status difference, which means that trainees may just be keeping the trainer happy. Second, the trainee knows what the rules of training programmes are and is merely 'jumping through hoops'. Third, the trainee may not be interacting with the dialogue, but merely transferring information from one text to another. Alternatively, scaffolding may have taken place.

Trainees often found the documents supportive and guiding. For example, one trainee, M, wrote in her respondent validation:

Excerpt 4.18: Reflection

'Through following the lesson plan, reflecting on my lesson became easier as I remembered every stage that I taught in my lesson... Again, following the lesson plan while reflecting on my lesson helped me to see its shortcomings, too'.
(RF 2)

In the following excerpt, I asked the trainee in a feedback session to reflect on whether he had achieved his aims or not in his teaching practice lesson:

Excerpt 4.19: Achieving aims

T: No, Ok, well let's have a look at your aims then. So, Ok, so in terms of your aims, how do you feel your lesson was, could you manage to achieve your aims, did the students do what you've written here? (T refers to E's lesson plan).

E: That's actually how I planned my lesson, in accordance with the aim in accordance with the sentence itself, by means of recognizing first I used paragraphs, where students could see them in context and, recognize, underline them and guess their meanings and practising with exercises, and matching and fill in the blanks, and using them in a story, using in creative skills.

By articulating his lesson plan aims as written on the plan, E reminded himself of his original plan. My intention was that he could reflect and evaluate on his achievement of aims:

T: Ok, so you are saying you, they did this, they did this, they did this, and they did this? [T pointing to the aims on the lesson plan].

E: That's the last one er, story completion that's that was not finished, but I will collect them next week and, I'll give feedback, and probably grade, let's see.
(FS 9)

To discuss the lesson by means of concrete written work was a significant scaffold. It was a visual and concrete psychological tool which could mediate between the trainee and the reflection. Referring to documents prompted further reflection in cases where the trainee was unable to articulate thoughts.

In this section I have presented an analysis of different types of scaffolding based on questions and answers between the trainees and I in both input sessions and feedback sessions. The different types of questions either elicited a recall of events and personal response. The reference to documents grounded the discussion in actual events and prompted a more convergent dialogue on the lesson. In these examples, I believe the different questions helped to scaffold the trainee's understanding of teaching by ensuring that the trainee and I were working from a shared understanding of the context. I have learnt that convergence of understanding of context and events are crucial to creating potential for scaffolding in the interaction. As can be seen from the above examples, where this is the case, the conditions for scaffolding are stronger and there is more potential for the trainer and trainee to learn and construct knowledge from the discussion. However, as I have pointed out in the first section, divergence of understanding of context and events create conditions where no scaffolding can take place. Convergence of understanding of roles and feedback conventions are also crucial to this interaction and I will give examples of this in the next chapter.

4.4.3 Scaffolding: working in the trainee's ZPD

As I state earlier, interaction between trainer and trainee do not always go smoothly with both participants being 'on the same page'. As I present above, there were many exchanges where there was a lack of scaffolding. In this section I will present a theme which emerged from some of the less straightforward feedback sessions. Based on the responses of the trainees, I felt that my role was to guide more specifically and explicitly. Mercer (1985) states that a crucial criterion of scaffolding in an educational context is guidance, which in turn depends on the competence of the learner. Contingent scaffolding becomes all the more explicit and observable (Wood and Wood 1996). I was aware that at certain points in the instructional discourse, the trainee was operating outside their ZPD. From limited responses and inappropriate responses, I realised that scaffolding would not take place. Thus, my intention was to scaffold in a way that would reduce the difficulty of the reflection task. I had to take the trainee's ZPD into consideration. As stated in Chapter 2, Wood et al.'s (1976) notion of a

type of scaffolding, which depends on a particular time, on a particular learner, on a particular task, was highly relevant here.

I found that explicit, highly structured scaffolding was appropriate in certain situations. I did this by providing guided questions and statements. I realise that the interpretation of such interaction could also be that the trainer is behaving in a very authoritative way and dominating the discussion with her own agenda. This is a point I shall discuss in the next chapter. However, I shall present this theme of reducing levels of difficulty to work in the trainee's ZPD. It should be noted that my intention was to scaffold, regardless of possible ideological motivations.

Such tension between the power status and understanding the role of feedback will be discussed in the next chapter, but it was clear from reading my data that some trainees needed a different form of prompting. I noticed the varying levels of ZPD and mentioned this in my diary (referring to a trainee):

Excerpt 20: Guess my mind

'She cannot "guess" what is in my mind, I have to ask much more direct questions or tell'. (RD 29.11.08)

There are many ideological issues arising from why the trainee had to guess what is in the trainer's mind, but these shall be discussed further. For the purposes of this section, my diary entry represents my surprise at realising that different trainees needed different forms of scaffolding, some needing to in fact be told, or much more heavily prompted.

Differing levels of competence and ZPDs required different scaffolding techniques. In the following extract from a feedback session, the trainee had not given a task to the students. I wanted him to reflect on this:

Excerpt 4.21: A task

T: There should always be a?

Og: Reading for a specific purpose.

T: Yes, exactly. Reading for a purpose. Read and summarize, read and, you know, find the answer to these questions, read and tell me your reactions, read and.

Og: Ok.

T: Is the point Ok. So, then you said at the end, what is the main issue which is a

very nice question and could have come?
Og: While-reading. (FS 10)

I asked a ‘fill in the slot’ question, where the trainee only had to provide one word. With such a prompt, Og was able to articulate his thoughts. Similarly, this scaffolding technique worked again further on in the exchange. In this way I was able to encourage the trainee to reflect on his reading activities.

Based on this feedback, in his self-evaluation report, Og summarised the conversation:

Excerpt 4.22: Learning

‘I’ve learnt that I need to be prepared just for specific questions, for an example about an article (reading for specific purpose!)’. (SE 3)

This exchange exemplifies how I needed to provide more guidance with some trainees. I needed to be aware of their ZPDs. The specificity of prompts needed to be greater with some trainees who had difficulty with, or were unwilling to reflect. I cannot make an assumption of why the trainee did not expand on his thoughts. It could be lack of pragmatic awareness in a feedback context, or it could be linguistic reasons. However, at that particular point in the interaction, the trainee needed more structured scaffolding. I will attempt to explain some possible reasons in the next chapter.

4.5 Conclusion to Chapter 4

To summarise, my data told a story that I had not been expecting. This expectation was based on much of the literature I had read on scaffolding in primary school classrooms, where the interaction between teacher and pupils is presented as neat, tidy and straightforward. The excerpts presented in the literature reveal certain questioning techniques which prompt pupils to respond. The conclusions are that these responses reveal thinking and construction of knowledge. However, as I read my data, I realised that my interactions with the trainees did not always seem so neat and tidy. There were many instances where I intended to scaffold, but could not. There were interactions where the potential to scaffold was blocked, ignored or simply did not happen. There were interactions which revealed differing levels of trainees’ ZPD and thus differing needs in terms of support and intervention. There were interactions which were neat and tidy, and in which my questions or prompts created potential for

scaffolding. There was also a theme of trainees initiating scaffolding opportunities.

The data pointed me to see that certain scaffolding techniques such as ‘why’ questions were able to scaffold in that the trainee had to justify and articulate their reasoning and understanding. Similarly, with some trainees, explicit and fill-in-the-blank type of structured scaffolding was appropriate. As a result of this study of the meaning-making taking place between my trainees and me, I realised that the data was pointing to conditions for scaffolding. Scaffolding was in fact a much more complex activity or construct than was portrayed in the literature. Thus, the themes that emerged told the story of conditions, potentials and intentions in scaffolding. This chapter has presented the themes in conditions for scaffolding at a linguistic, micro-level. My data also revealed that there was a macro-level of scaffolding taking place in the trainees’ world. The macro-level of scaffolding is at a meta, organisational and contextual level. The next chapter will present this data analysis.

Chapter 5

Data analysis II: A macro-level examination of scaffolding

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will present and analyse data which revealed features of scaffolding at a macro-structural layer. I shall refer to these scaffolds as macro-scaffolds, to distinguish from micro-scaffolds at a linguistic level. I found the distinction between macro and micro-scaffolding put forward by Hammond and Gibbons (2005) to be guiding in my analysis of the data. In their distinction between macro and micro-scaffolding, they describe micro-scaffolding as being at the level of interaction, similar to my own description. However, their concept of macro-scaffolding refers to the materials and curriculum-level organization of the learning context. My notion of macro-scaffolding goes beyond the designed level, to the level of established discourses and trainer and trainee expectations.

As with Chapter 4, I have structured this chapter around the main categories which emerged from the data related to macro-scaffolding. These categories were discourses of ELT and the notions of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ teaching, conventions of lesson feedback and the related roles and expectations of trainee and trainer, and the relationship between theory and practice. As with Chapter 4, the structure of this chapter reflects the themes which informed my framework for describing scaffolding at two different levels. I present my data in this chapter in a way that builds a picture of how the prevalent discourses and accepted practices fulfilled a contextual role in scaffolding the construction of teaching knowledge. Thus each category and theme represents part of the wider framework which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Once again, I did not have any a priori frameworks. The codes which follow the excerpts again refer to the data sources. These are feedback sessions, research diary, respondent feedbacks, self-evaluation documents, assignments and interviews with colleagues (Summarised in Appendix H).

The construct of macro-scaffold is an insight from this research. I believe that to study scaffolding in a teacher training context, then such contextual factors cannot be ignored. These macro-scaffolds can also go some way to explaining why potentials for micro-

scaffolding are sometimes ignored or blocked.

5.2 Discourses of ELT

Daniels' (1995) distinction between micro-practices and macro-structures in schools informed my theme of discourses in ELT. Daniels points to the need to explore the social context of the school in terms of modes of thinking and social practice. Thus in this section I will present data which emerged from a theme of 'mistakes in teaching' in the context of accepted practices. One macro-scaffold is an idea of 'good' teaching which is used to prioritise what content to cover, how to present this content, what to structure and base feedback sessions on, and also to act as a base for trainees to develop their own criteria of 'good' teaching and thus evaluate their performance. The words 'mistakes', 'good', 'bad' were used extensively by the trainees when talking about their teaching, or to describe their experiences. They also deferred to me when I was making suggestions by saying 'yes, you are right'. The theme that seemed to emerge was that there is a right way to teach, and that the trainees felt that their aim was to learn this way. Such a theme was also seen in the comments made by colleagues, and by my own approach to feedback.

I would like to point out that such a notion of the right way to teach can be controversial. On the one hand I would like my trainees to feel they are being provided with the teaching techniques to be able to plan and execute lessons, but on the other hand I am aware of the dominant discourses of ELT. Such dominant discourses have been criticised for restricting teachers to teach in the communicative way and that there is indeed a 'better' way to teach. Such discourses invariably bring in the native-speaker teacher trainer as the all-knower. I have been explicit about my reflexivity in earlier chapters, and this is relevant also in the presentation of my data. The theme of dominant discourses brings to the fore my tenuous position as native-speaker and trainer, as well as my role of participant in the research.

These dominant ELT discourses, with their implicit and explicit promotion of ways of doing and being, were a strong theme in the experience of the trainees. Their comments, the way they described their lessons, their acceptance of what was right and wrong pointed to conditions for macro-scaffolding which impacted on their construction of teaching knowledge.

5.2.1. ‘Mistakes’: ‘good’ and ‘bad’ teaching

A common theme which emerged through phrases such as ‘practise what we preach’, ‘wrong techniques’, ‘good methodology’ and ‘mistakes about teaching’ displays a notion of what I will refer to as ‘the right way to teach’. This theme crossed all feedback sessions, input sessions, reflection papers and interviews with colleagues. Pre-service trainees were presented with techniques for planning and implementing their lessons. I used my own beliefs and values of ‘good’ teaching on which to base my evaluation and feedback to trainees, as well as the Graduate School of Education check lists for evaluating lessons (see Appendix I).

Colleagues working with the same group of trainees also talked about a ‘right way to teach’ and the concept of trainer as model. The excerpt below is from an interview with a Turkish colleague where he brings up the notion of ‘loop input’. This is an approach to teacher training in which the trainer models the activity she wants the trainees to do with their own students. The interview was open-ended, and he referred to our role as trainers and the need for us to model good teaching behaviour.

Excerpt 5.1: Practise what you preach

‘We practise what we preach, so, we, I actually take them through this process so perhaps they can take their students through that process as well, so it’s not just introduction skills or concept etc, also showing how to go about er a student-centred inductive writing lesson’.

(Int 1)

In this interview, N made it clear that not only should we, as trainers, be encouraging them to use a particular approach, but we should also be modelling such an approach. N equated the loop input approach with the idea of practising what we preach. By modelling certain techniques with trainees, we are both showing them the steps for a certain activity, but we are also implicitly modelling what we think is good teaching. This modelling is promoting and valorizing a particular approach.

The uses of the words ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ and phrases such as ‘make mistakes’ were commonly used by trainees to describe their teaching, as if there were a correct blueprint. Trainee C wrote about this in a school experience report.

Excerpt 5.2: Showing progress

“After Mrs Engin's observation and getting many useful feedbacks from her, I felt I showed an immediate progress in terms of practising what I should do and avoiding wrong techniques”. (Ass 1)

The trainee has a concept that there is a blue-print for teaching with which she can evaluate her own teaching. She uses terms such as ‘should do’ and ‘avoid wrong techniques’ which suggests that there is one way to teach and in order to be successful she must learn this way. To use the term ‘wrong’ implies that the trainee knows of a ‘right’ way. The trainee has built up a binary distinction between right and wrong teaching which must be followed. It is also clear that she saw my role as guide to stay on this ‘right’ path and that to make progress she needed to teach in the ‘accepted’ way. There is of course some truth in this, there are some teaching techniques that are more appropriate than others in certain contexts, and this trainee had an awareness of this.

The notion of ‘proper’ methods is also evident in the trainees’ self-evaluation reports which they wrote after their teaching practice. One trainee’s first sentence in her self-evaluation was as follows:

Excerpt 5.3: Proper methods

‘I think my lesson was good. Of course there were some mistakes but I tried to apply the proper method’. (SE 4)

The language the trainee used here very much suggests that in her mind there is a right way, a proper method. She evaluated her lesson in terms of to what extent she could use the techniques she had been taught by her trainers. She also uses strong evaluative words such as ‘good’ to describe her lesson. Her notion of ‘good’ is based on how much she used the ‘proper method’, and uses the term ‘method’ in the singular to suggest one type only.

This is interesting as I am not aware of the trainers suggesting there is one way to teach. The trainees are exposed to a wide variety of lecturers, mentor teachers in the schools, peers and video clips of teaching. Nevertheless, the trainees had a strong perception of the right way. The value of such a notion is debatable, and I will discuss this further in the final chapter.

When I taught methodology sessions, I presented what I believed to be different approaches to teaching. This was not only in terms of the input I gave, but also in terms of my own teaching

methods and style. I referred to this at times in my feedback sessions, encouraging the trainee to see the links between what they experience in class with me, and what their options were in their own classroom.

In the following extract, the trainee had not made the different stages of the lesson coherent to the students during her lesson. Despite the fact the trainee had planned carefully, the lesson comprised a ‘hotchpotch’ of activities. I suggested writing the plan on the board.

Excerpt 5.4: A plan on the board

T: For example, I’m only talking about myself. I’m sure it’s true for all the other teachers, for example, what do I do at the beginning of my lessons with you guys? Do you know what you’re doing?

E: Yes

T: Well I’d like to think you know.

E: Yes I know.

T: You know I write it on the board for example you know I want you to know how it’s all coming together. What we’re doing, what the point is, that’s all I mean. (FS 9)

I referred to my own routine of writing the lesson plan on the board for the trainees, and asked the trainee to reflect on how and why I did this, in the light of his own teaching. Referring to what I do in the input sessions sets up the notion of what I do is a model of ‘good’ practice. One interpretation of this excerpt is that the trainee was able to make the link and that the input gave him such a model. Alternatively, it could be interpreted that by having such a model, the trainee could reflect more on his own lesson, and thus develop his teaching.

A model of ‘good teaching’ also framed the feedback that I gave to the trainees. In the interview excerpt below, a British colleague teaching the same cohort of trainees stated that when giving feedback he had in mind a ‘good model’ of teaching. This model helped him to frame the feedback, but it is clear that the model also influenced his perceptions of a lesson, and influenced his value judgements about a lesson and teaching performance.

Excerpt 5.5: Framework for feedback

‘My feedback was framed very much in terms of not just methodology, my own sense of what good methodology is, but my sense of classroom management but more concretely, what we’d actually been talking about or reading about in the classroom management course. So this made it a very strong interactive process’.
(Int 2)

There are two points that need to be made here in terms of framing the feedback to trainees.

My colleague, D, was explicit about what framed his feedback, and that this frame was his own 'sense' of 'good practice'. He also said that a basis for his feedback was the content of his classroom management sessions, a strategy he used to bridge the theory with the practise. This point will be taken up in section 5.3. Thus, colleagues working with this cohort and I explicitly stated that we had a belief about a 'good' way to teach, and we based our input and feedback on such a belief.

As can be seen from the above comments made by trainees, they were very much aware of a concept of a 'right way' to teach and that our role was to point out the difference between what they were doing and the 'right' way. This discourse of accepted practices was clearly stated by trainee Z in her respondent validations. She wrote:

Excerpt 5.6: Mistakes in teaching

'Basically there are many things you tried to show how I made mistakes about teaching and I realised it when you said them' (RF 3).

There are several issues in this data about how trainee Z conceptualised both teaching and how she reflected. Firstly, she saw my role as one in which I point out 'mistakes', and secondly, she stated that she was able to reflect on her teaching when I 'told' her (see 4.4.3). Thirdly, she explained my role as one of 'teller' or provider, and hers as a more passive role. Z perceives teaching as a subject which can be right and wrong, and as a trainee she can make mistakes. It also suggests that rather than being proactive and trying out her own style, she waits to find out what she does wrong from the trainer.

The notion of a 'right' way to teach is evident in the phrase 'on the right track' which the trainee used in her response to her feedback transcripts.

Excerpt 5.7: The script

The script helped me to realize once more my strengths and some points that I need to consider. To be honest, I forgot some points that we talked about on that day. Thanks to this script, I have both the points that I need to consider and the points that I am good at. It's a written document that will stay forever and from time to time, I'll read it to check whether I am on the right track or not. (RF 4)

In this extract N used phrases such as 'good at' and 'check' and 'on the right track'. All these phrases suggest that she knows there is a way she should teach, and she checks her

performance against such a blue-print. She describes the script in a positive way, referring to it as a guide for her evaluation, and as a written reminder of what this blue-print should look like. A sense emerging from the data was that this notion of the right way to teach served as a scaffold rather than a straightjacket. The notions helped the trainees to evaluate their teaching and grounded their reflection on common ground with each other and the trainer. As such, the discourses of ELT in this particular case created scaffolding conditions as opposed to restricting conditions.

Thus, trainer's beliefs about 'good' teaching inevitably influenced the cognitive development of our trainees in terms of what knowledge they constructed about teaching, and their criteria for evaluating their knowledge. One consequence of this is that the trainer not only provides a blue-print, but also becomes a model themselves. Similarly, the trainees are immersed in discourses of ELT in which there are certain ways to teach. In such discourses the trainer is also presented as and perceived as the authority on this method.

This theme of trainer as authority and expert in the methods could be seen in the way trainees often deferred to me in discussions about teaching, specifically feedback sessions. The following are typical examples. In both excerpts, the trainee and I discussed the lesson which they had just taught.

Excerpt 5.8: Creativity

T: Do something more creative. You know, something short very simple, a little bit more creative.

N: Mm huh.

T: What do you think?

N: Yes, you are right of course. (FS 11)

In this extract the trainee did not give her opinion on my suggestion. Her response was a passive one in which she agreed with me. I could not be sure whether she was cognitively interacting with my suggestion. I specifically asked her opinion at the end and she told me that I was 'right'. Such language suggests that the trainees saw me as the expert and that my ideas were part of the dominant discourses that they needed to 'master' in order to become teachers.

In the second example, the trainee justified his actions, but in the end deferred to me.

Excerpt 5.9: A focus

Oz: I think it's a very nice idea. Actually I thought about it but I didn't.

T: You didn't do it, Ok. I think with literature lessons it's very easy to just discuss all the time talk and analyse and that's great, but what have they got in their hands? You say.

Oz: It's about the 4th lesson. The 4th lesson will be a revision lesson.

T: Fine, but you still need a focus in this lesson.

Oz: Yes, you are right. (FS 12)

In these two excerpts there are several issues at play. Firstly, the trainees deferred to me and accepted my comments by using the words 'you are right'. One interpretation is that they agree with me based on the discussion we are having, and based on the evidence in the documents of what they did and their own reflections. Another interpretation is that they do not agree with me, but due to my status, they feel obliged to agree with me. Thirdly, they may not agree with me, but the discourses of ELT suggest that as the trainer, I know what is right and wrong.

In this section I have presented data which revealed that there was a strong sense of 'good' teaching which pervaded our feedback, actions and even training style. These discourses of right ways of doing and behaving can serve as a macro-structure which is used to demarcate acceptable teaching performance. As I shall argue in Chapter 6, I feel that there has to be an element of evaluation in teacher training. The trainees expect input and guidance on their performance, thus our role inevitably involves making judgements and evaluation. The discourses act as a guide and a frame for trainers and trainees, delimiting the possibilities. In one sense, a blue-print provides conditions for scaffolding as it reduces the possibilities, and breaks down the complicated job of teaching. Trainees have specific techniques to use which have been presented to them. They can take their 'tool-kit' of teaching techniques and prepare a plan. However, as shall be further discussed in the final chapter, one could argue that such a blue-print acts as a straight-jacket, forcing the trainee to teach to a certain pattern. I am aware that such an argument has force; however, there was a sense in the data there was a certain expected way to teach which supported their planning and evaluation. Such a notion also created more convergence in the feedback sessions and the self-evaluation reports.

5.2.2 The conventions of lesson feedback

The conventions of lesson feedback were part of the ELT discourses that the trainees found themselves in. By conventions of feedback I refer to understanding the roles, the expectations, the aim of self-evaluation, and understanding the place of reflection. It was part

of the expectations of my colleagues and I that the trainee was able to reflect on performance and analyse strong and weak points. Although most trainees were able to and willing to do this, there were examples of trainees who, for a variety of possible reasons, were unable to respond to the feedback session in a way the trainer expected, or simply did not respond in the expected way.

Hammond and Gibbon's (2005) concept of participant structures and shared goals and expectations at the macro-scaffolding level informed my analysis of data in which there seemed to be little understanding of the conventions and feedback. It was clear from the data that the theme of understanding the conventions of lesson feedback played a strong role in potentials and conditions for scaffolding. There was a symbiotic relationship between micro and macro-scaffolding. When the trainees understood their roles and the conventions of feedback, there were more conditions for scaffolding, and more potential. When the trainee did not understand the feedback process, there were fewer potential scaffolding opportunities.

Some trainees understood the role of the feedback session and the roles and expectations were shared. They realised that I would ask probing questions and that they would be expected to reflect and discuss their teaching, and suggest alternatives. They also understood that my role was to guide and probe, rather than 'tell'. In a respondent feedback, O wrote:

Excerpt 5.10: Trainer beliefs

'At this moment, Mrs Engin addressed questions about the parts of lesson where I was not that much effective. We discussed together these points. The most important thing about this process was that Mrs. Engin did not expose or force her beliefs directly on me'. (RF 5)

The trainee comments in this extract reveal that he understood his role as active participant in the feedback process. It is also clear that he understood my role as that of guide and facilitator rather than sole authority, and that the feedback was a joint process of learning and meaning-making. On the same theme, in his respondent feedback E also wrote the following:

Excerpt 5.11: On the same page

'I became aware that my mentor and I were mostly on the same page during the feedback'. (RF 6).

In the second extract the trainee articulated the importance of convergence of ideas for the feedback process to be beneficial. His use of the term 'on the same page' is insightful as it

suggests the need to both understand each other. He also refers to the fact that the feedback was a process, and that we were both active members of this process. The discussion in the feedback session brought him to the conclusion that convergence was necessary and occurring. Not only is convergence a necessary condition for scaffolding, but also an awareness of its importance creates even stronger conditions for scaffolding.

An awareness of the conventions of feedback can be a support in terms of seeing the whole process of observation and feedback as part of the developmental cycle. In the following two extracts from school experience reports, the trainees expressed their understanding of this process.

Excerpt 5.12: School experience

The first useful experience for me is when our instructor DY observed me when I was teaching in school A and gave me detailed feedback in terms of calling on students equally. (Ass. 1)

After being observed by DY in 10T and getting feedback, I realized something that I had not noticed before; I was not fair in sex distribution in nominating the students. (Ass. 2)

Both trainees here specifically chose to write about feedback to the prompt ‘what have been the most useful learning experiences’ in a School Experience assignment. These responses revealed an understanding of the role of feedback and the role of the trainer to guide reflection and thinking about what they are doing in the classroom. They both mention feedback as the stimulator for reflection and focusing on specific aspects of their teaching.

This theme of understanding conventions of feedback was most apparent in instances where the trainee did not have such an awareness. As is often the case, the less straightforward interactions exemplified the theme more clearly. An inability to reflect on the lesson during the feedback session suggested that the trainee did not understand the roles to be taken during the interaction, and also the aim of the feedback session.

In the following extract from a feedback session, I encouraged the trainee to reflect on his questions. In the pre-conference Og and I had discussed the need to prepare and ask very specific questions, but he did not do this.

Excerpt 5.13: Specific questions

T: Because you've got a big aim here, "the students will have read and discussed, analysed" you said you wanted them to analyse the texts. In order to analyse we have to find very specific questions.

Og: Yes, I am saying that.

T: And I looked for some well yesterday when we talked you said yes, yes I'll ask some questions, so I thought they might be in your lesson plan.

Og: Yes, I thought the same thing, to prepare some questions, but to be honest, I couldn't think of any appropriate questions. (FS 10)

Despite the very specific focus of the conversation, the trainee did not pick up on the fact that I wanted him to reflect on his questions. He did not seem to share an understanding of the conventions of feedback in the sense he should be critically evaluating his lesson. He made it clear that he was satisfied with his lesson. I probed further to ask about his questions, and he admitted that he could not think of questions. The guidance and directive strategies here did not scaffold construction of knowledge about teaching because there was no shared understanding of the aim of feedback, and our respective roles. He understood the importance of preparing questions, but he did not understand the need to be critically evaluating his lesson. Despite the negotiation of meanings, the lack of awareness on the part of the trainee resulted in no conditions for scaffolding, and the interaction gave no potentials for scaffolding.

The trainee's ZPD is relevant when analysing responses in feedback sessions. In the above extract, Og had difficulty in analysing his lesson. Seven months later, with the appropriate feedback and some successful scaffolding experiences Og was able to reflect on the above conversation. In his respondent feedback, Og wrote:

Excerpt 5.14: Oral and written forms

'It is really good to see how I have changed in the process... It sounds quite weird that when utterances are written, it seems somehow ridiculous to see the difference between oral and written form. If I say 'no', some of them are not uttered by me', it will not be honest, because you have the evidence of recording'.
(RF 7).

Here the trainee articulated an understanding and awareness that there has been progress that he has learned from the feedback sessions. He could not believe that his earlier interactions had taken place, and he believed that he had changed considerably. The written version of the feedback session itself here acted as a stimulator for reflection, something which Og could not

do seven months earlier.

Manipulating the feedback session for their own purposes was a sign of a trainee who understood the conventions of feedback, but felt confident enough to make their own changes. In the following excerpt the trainee made this point clear.

The following excerpt is from the same feedback session with N. The feedback was about one particular lesson. I asked the opening reflection question.

Excerpt 5.15: Points to consider

T: Do you want to talk about your lesson, if you've had a chance to think?

N: I want to start with the points that I need to consider.

T: You don't want to start with positive points?

N: No, I don't want.

T: No, Ok, fine it's up to you.

N: Er, last activity wasn't successful, about the phrasal verbs. (FS 11)

In this interaction the trainee was very proactive in stating how she wants to start the feedback session, and which issues she wanted to discuss first. I usually started by discussing the trainees' positive points, but here the trainee is very clear in how she wanted the feedback to proceed. She had thought about her lesson very carefully and she has prioritised some 'weak' points to discuss. This is a clear example of there being conditions for scaffolding due to the trainee's clear understanding of the conventions of feedback. She was aware of her role, my role and the role of the session. This was an example of a trainee understanding the discourse of feedback, but manipulating it to fit her own concerns and agenda.

Although most of the data revealed an understanding of the role of feedback and the trainer in a positive light, one trainee found the presence of the trainer a stressor rather than a support. In the following excerpt, the trainee and I were discussing the lesson when he explained how he felt.

Excerpt 5.16: Stress I

Oz: But you being there was a little bit...

T: Stressful?

Oz: It made me feel uncomfortable.

T: Sorry, but I'm here as support.

Oz: Yea, yesterday's lesson was better and tomorrow's lesson will be better.

T: But I'm here to support, you mustn't see me as the devil.

Oz: But you give the grades.

T: I do, but at the same time..

Oz: Maybe it's about the worry. I should not disappoint you, as your student.

T: (both laugh) No, not at all. Ok so anything you would change? (FS 12)

Here it is clear that the trainee understood the role of trainer to be supportive, but at the same time was very honest about the stress this created. It is also interesting that he focused on the fact that I would give grades. This trainee was very concerned with the presence of the trainer and mentioned it in his self-evaluation of the above lesson.

Excerpt 5.17: Stress II

‘The supervisor’s existence affected me negatively’. (SE 5) .

As I mentioned in Chapter 2, my reflexivity has been a feature of this research. It is especially clear in this data. Although I was their trainer, and we talked of support and development, the reality was that there were grades at the end of the course, and I gave them. I had to be aware that I had this controversial role. In such a case, although the trainee was quite aware of the conventions of feedback in terms of process, his stress at having the trainer in his lesson to grade him overrode such understanding and perhaps blocked potentials for scaffolding.

This trainee was the only one who mentioned this dual role of supportive and caring trainer, and the gatekeeper. I am sure that many others felt this tension in roles, but did not mention it. The result of this tension for this particular trainee was in fact a hindrance to reflection and construction of knowledge at that moment.

In this section I have analysed how the conventions of feedback itself can create or not create conditions for scaffolding reflection and the construction of knowledge. Understanding roles, expectations and functions of the feedback session supported a more fruitful and appropriate dialogue about teaching.

The data told the story of how such a macro-scaffold can affect the micro-scaffolding level, at the linguistic level in terms of interaction between the trainer and trainee. The questions and prompts that the trainer uses to create scaffolding conditions can be affected and influenced by a macro-level of scaffolding, in this case, awareness of conventions. Where the conditions are blocked due to lack of understanding, this will influence to what extent there can be

scaffolding potential at the micro-level of interaction.

5.3. Theory and practice

A strong theme which emerged from working and talking to the trainees on a daily basis was the importance of work in schools, teaching practice and feedback sessions. Many trainees would comment on their observations or teaching experiences in the methodology classes. Theory and practice can be linked in the following ways; through referring to school work in sessions, through teaching practice, through observations, and through the feedback sessions after teaching.

As far as possible, my colleagues and I tried to link the theory and practice, and were explicit about this crucial link. Referring to school work during faculty classes can serve as a way to link theory and practice, and to encourage trainees to reflect on their observations, and how it fits in with their current theoretical knowledge.

In the following excerpt I was observing a colleague's classroom management class with the same cohort of trainees.

Excerpt 5.18: Classroom management

The lesson started with a discussion of a conference most of them had been to the previous Saturday. The instructor asked them to report back on any tips or ideas that they learnt about classroom management. They had a few minutes to think about it. Trainees were arranged according to mentor groups in their school, and asked to brainstorm classroom routines that they had observed. This led into feedback on a reading they had for homework. (Observation notes, 1.12.08)

In the input session, my colleague linked their classroom management session content to both a conference they had been to recently, and their work in schools. By making the links between the theory, and classes they took in University, to their teaching experience, trainees were more able to see the link, and to integrate the theoretical knowledge with the practical knowledge.

Spending time in schools observing and teaching whilst taking theory courses in the faculty is a strong scaffold for constructing knowledge. For this macro-scaffold to prompt reflection, it depended on how the theory and practice were linked, and how the instructors guided the

trainees to make the link.

This linking of theory and practice was also a strong theme in the assignments that I analysed in December 2008 following a school experience course that I had taught and led (see Appendix G). Many trainees wrote that they learnt most about teaching by teaching their own lessons, and that the most useful learning experience had been either very successful lessons, or disastrous lessons. The opportunity to teach and try out ideas that were discussed or presented in class scaffolded their construction of knowledge to a great extent. Two of the trainees wrote that:

Excerpt 5.19: Turning theory into practice

‘In general, one of the most beneficial learning experiences (from School Experience II) was that I turned the theory into practice through school experience’. (Ass. 3)

‘They (useful learning experiences in School Experience II) are the ones I was either really a failure of a success’. (Ass. 4)

The data from reflection papers and discussions with trainees revealed that there was a cycle of constructing teaching knowledge: first read / hear / find out about a technique, secondly try out in practice teaching, thirdly, get feedback and then either confirm or try again. Sometimes even observing at stage two was sufficient to confirm their ideas, or negate them. The theme of observation and particularly teaching practice as a macro-scaffold was very strong.

Feedback sessions themselves can serve as a macro-scaffold for constructing knowledge. In the previous chapter I analysed the particular discourse of the feedback sessions, but it became clear that the process and existence of a feedback session served as a scaffold in itself.

In the following excerpt from respondent feedback, trainees wrote about the role of feedback in their learning:

Excerpt 5.20: Help from instructors

‘It is crucial for us to get feedback from our instructors in order to enhance our learning process. For this reason, I am glad to get any kind of feedback from my instructors. With the help of this feedback process, I find chances to revise and adapt my personal development’. (RF 5).

In this excerpt, the trainee showed that he understood the role of feedback, accepted it and even embraced it as it helped him to shape his teaching and also make the link between theory and practice. This trainee was very aware that he had to find his own style of teaching as well, and that feedback is one way to guide this development.

During a chat with a trainee Zu, she pointed out that having courses and work in schools at the same time were beneficial because they wrote reflection reports every week, learned new things in class and compared them with the classes they saw and taught in. Similarly, she pointed out that she liked to ‘do things rather than just sit there’.

The data suggests that for trainees, the school experience and teaching practice courses supported their theory courses in the university. The situated learning and the trainees’ legitimate peripheral participation gave them the opportunity to practise teaching techniques and develop their knowledge about teaching. Trainees articulated that the theory became real when they were in the classrooms. However, this alone does not fully support the construction of knowledge. The feedback has a significant role to play in mediating the theory and the practice. Another mediating factor was how the instructor linked the theory and practice in the two fields. The instructor needed to constantly refer to their practice in the theory sessions, and in the school work, needed to make links to the theory classes. As a macro-structure, the opportunity for making theory into practice scaffolded the development of teaching knowledge.

5.4 Conclusion to Chapter 5

In this chapter I have presented data which portray a macro-scaffold, a scaffold that supported the learning and construction of knowledge within the feedback and input sessions. The micro and macro-scaffolds were symbiotic. Certain macro-scaffolds were necessary for micro-scaffolds to be appropriate. The macro-scaffolds provided the conditions for there to be micro-scaffolding potentials. Each level of scaffold could affect the other positively or negatively. For example, lack of shared understanding of the feedback session led to a breakdown in the interaction at a micro-level. Alternatively, a strong shared understanding of the conventions of lesson feedback promoted an interaction in which I could ask high-level evaluation questions with the trainee articulating her knowledge. Learning was also a

continual process, and such a macro-scaffold supported such continual learning. This macro-scaffold served as a contextual support for the scaffolding talk between trainer and trainee. Each type of scaffold required the existence of the other for optimum learning and construction of knowledge. The macro-scaffolds of ELT discourses, such as practical work in schools and a shared understanding of the conventions of feedback sessions supported and provided the conditions for the micro-scaffolding between trainer and trainee at an interactional level.

In the next chapter I shall discuss the findings presented in Chapter 4 and 5. I shall discuss the implications from this data in terms of creating conditions for scaffolding. As I explained earlier, my intention was to explore and find neat interactions which clearly indicated which scaffolding techniques were successful. However, the data told a different story. My trainees' work and interactions which form the data for this thesis pointed to a need to explore the conditions for scaffolding. I shall discuss the implications for exploring conditions for scaffolding with reference to this data and the literature discussed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the implications from my research and answer my research questions. To this end, I will firstly summarize the methodology and results. I shall then discuss and exemplify the implications of my research within the frame of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and my guiding research questions. I will then present my learning points and recommendations for practice. Finally I shall conclude this thesis with a suggestion of areas for further research.

As stated in Chapter 2, the first aim of this research was to explore scaffolding at a level of interaction. This involved an examination of potentials for scaffolding, blocks to scaffolding as well as successful scaffolding. The second aim of this research was to investigate the contextual factors in scaffolding. This focused on an examination of contextual and organizational factors that created or blocked conditions for scaffolding. It was clear that there was a symbiotic relationship between contextual scaffolding conditions at the macro-level, and the potential for scaffolding at the micro-level of interaction between trainer and trainee. I was interested in how these conditions supported or blocked the construction of teaching knowledge of my Turkish teacher trainees in an English-medium university in Ankara, Turkey. Until recently, the main focus of research into scaffolding construction of knowledge has relied mainly on examples of interaction in a teacher-fronted class or one-on-one exchanges. The result of this research is a theory of overlapping levels of micro-scaffolding which interact with all- pervasive contextual scaffolding conditions.

As stated in Chapter 2, conceptualizations of differing levels of scaffolding have informed this research. Daniels's (1995) distinction between macro-structures, as in the organization and discourses of a school, and micro-practices as in pedagogy, highlights the importance of context and organization in learning. Hammond and Gibbons (2005) operationalise a framework of macro-scaffolding, relating to the design of the curriculum, and micro-scaffolding which relates to the interaction between teacher and learner. These are significant studies and both emphasise the significance of the interaction and talk between teacher and learner, as well as the context. However, neither framework describes in enough detail the specific symbiotic relationship between the two levels. This research focuses on the

functioning of both levels to each other, with specific reference to differing levels within micro-scaffolding.

6.2 Summary of the research

I worked closely as a teacher educator from September 2008 – May 2009 with a cohort of 28 Turkish teacher trainees studying in an English-medium university. These trainees were in their final year of an MA in English Teacher Education which also led to Qualified Teacher Status. This is a Ministry of Education recognized qualification and allows these teachers to teach in secondary and high schools across Turkey. I worked with this group of trainees on a daily basis as their lecturer, teacher trainer, supervisor and university advisor. My advising role involved meetings on a regular basis to discuss general academic performance, future plans, job applications, and interviews.

My methodological orientation was a constructivist / interpretivist one utilizing ethnographic techniques. In my data analysis I drew on:

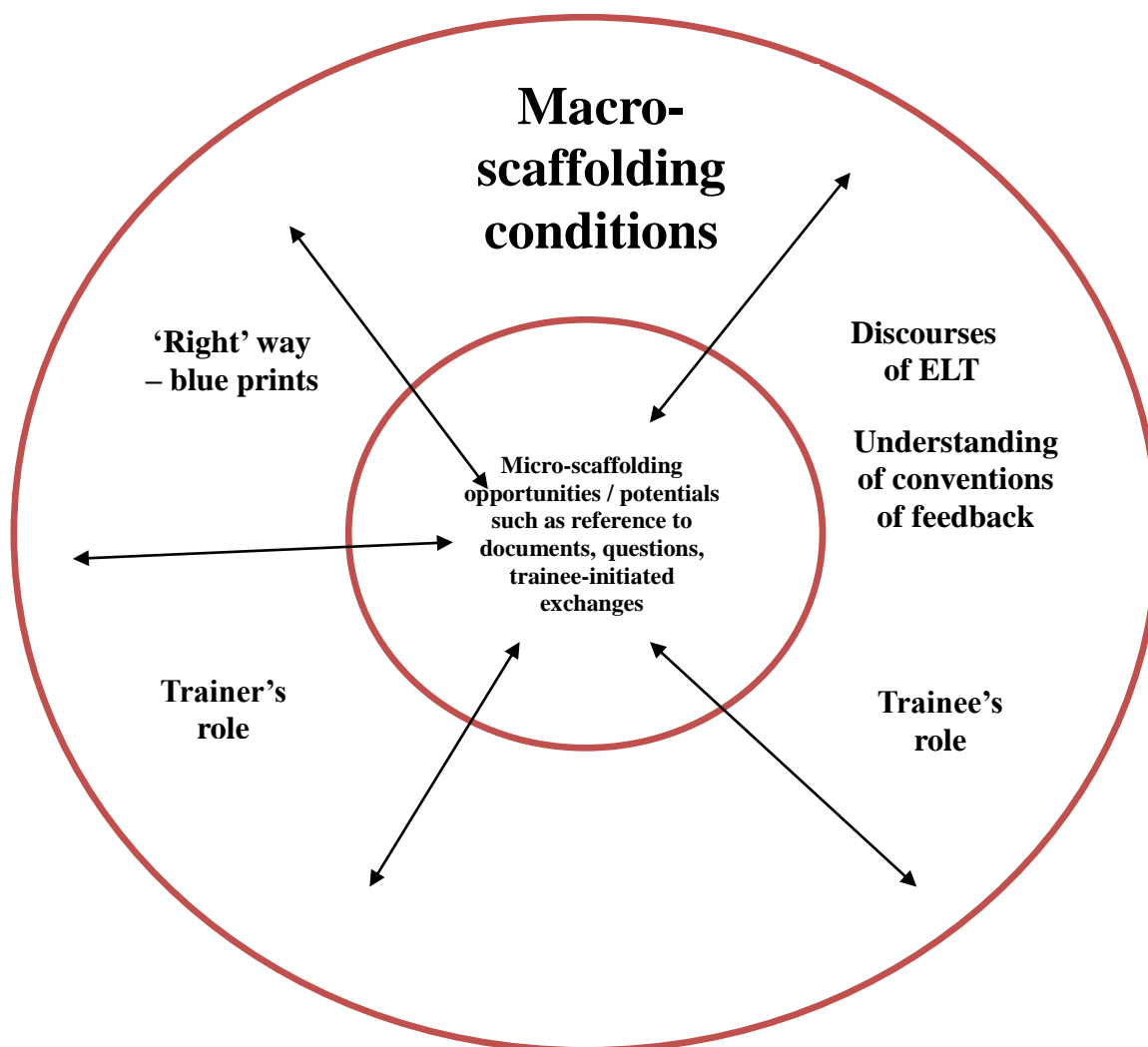
- 1) transcribed input sessions which had been videoed,
- 2) transcribed audio-recordings of feedback sessions following teaching practice,
- 3) document analysis of assignments,
- 4) self-evaluation reports following teaching practice,
- 5) respondent validation from the trainees on reading their feedback transcripts and listening to the audio-recordings, and
- 6) a researcher diary.

Overall, one of the main findings and surprises was that scaffolding was not a simple and tidy event which I could assume was happening in the interactions between me and the trainees. Another main finding from the data was that scaffolding was not only an ‘event’ or ‘practice’, it was also a construct. In the literature on interactions with students and their teacher, the concept of scaffolding is defined in terms of what the trainees and the trainer do and say. It involves specific strategies which prompt reflection and construction of knowledge. I found that this was not always the case, and in this chapter I shall outline my contribution to the work on scaffolding of knowledge construction in a specific context.

6.3 The relationship between micro and macro-scaffolding.

Before specifically focusing on my research questions, I would like to extend the current notion of scaffolding. From the data it was clear that scaffolding operated at a contextual and organizational level as well as an interactional level. This construct could not be defined only in terms of talk and practice or behaviour. It was not always possible to break down such scaffolding into specific techniques. As a result, I defined such scaffolding as scaffolding conditions. The micro practices and macro conditions are mutually beneficial. Without one, the other will not be successful. The data suggests that both levels are necessary to support the construction of teaching knowledge. The relationship is presented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: The relationship between micro and macro-scaffolding



The two-way arrows refer to the symbiotic relationship. Micro-scaffolding opportunities at a level of interaction are dependent on the macro-scaffolding conditions. For example, a particular question or prompt from the trainer to promote reflection on a teaching point is only an opportunity for scaffolding if the trainee understands the conventions of feedback sessions. Similarly, even if the trainer or trainee understands their role in scaffolding teaching knowledge, scaffolding may not take place if the trainer does not use an appropriate question or prompt, or if the trainee does not become actively involved in the feedback by asking questions or justifying actions. Hammond and Gibbons (2005) make similar conclusions about the relationship between micro and macro scaffolding from their extensive study in a school context. However, their notion of micro-scaffolding does not give actual examples of scaffolding talk, nor does it account for the established pedagogic practices and expectations which pervade the discourses at macro-scaffolding level. In the next sections I will elaborate on features of micro and macro-scaffolding.

6.4.1 Micro-scaffolding: Obstacles to scaffolding.

In this section I shall focus on my first research question:

Research question 1: What are the characteristics of scaffolding in trainer and trainee talk in a Turkish teacher training context with Turkish speaking English teacher trainees?

An examination of trainer and trainee talk necessarily focuses on micro-scaffolding. The main themes which emerged from micro-scaffolding were instances of no scaffolding, and instances of scaffolding. It was clear at the micro-level that opportunities for scaffolding were missed, ignored or blocked. Categories emerging from such situations were opportunities missed, and divergent agendas. Categories which emerged from studying instances where scaffolding seemed to take place were questions, use of documents as reference points, as well as trainee justifications of teaching and questions. In the next section I shall discuss the implications for promoting scaffolding and avoiding the pitfalls of missed potentials. Scaffolding requires there to be some uptake on the part of the trainee. There are some obstacles to this uptake. One is excessive value-dissonance (Alexander 2001). This is manifest in dialogues where trainer and trainee do not agree on the importance of certain teaching decisions.

Another possible obstacle is incongruent or conflicting registers (Alexander 2001). This can be seen in dialogues where there is no shared understanding of terms and concepts. This is also referred to as 'misfiring scaffolds' by Bliss et al. (1996), when the student misinterprets the teacher because they are not 'on the same page'. A third obstacle is language. I refer here to the language used by trainer, the trainer's approach to trainees' language errors, and possible pragmatic failure. Although linguistic errors by trainees did not cause communication breakdown, they inhibited the potential to scaffold by my response to them. I 'disturbed' the trainee's flow of thought. Similarly, trainees' concern over their language use and the fact that they were operating in an L2 could inhibit conditions for scaffolding. This concern was clear in the respondent feedbacks. Other linguistic 'obstructions' could be due to pragmatic failure. The trainee was not equipped with the linguistic and pragmatic resources necessary for the feedback interaction (Dippold 2009). An inability or unwillingness to participate in the institutional discourse (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 2005) may be due to linguistic or pragmatic reasons, as well as due to misunderstanding of expectations, which I shall discuss in a further section. In other words, failure to participate in the teacher training discourses may be due to micro-practices, such as language, or macro-practices, such as understanding and awareness of expected behaviour.,

To conclude this section, I would like to put forward the idea that scaffolding needs to be examined by looking at both the prompt and the response. It is not possible to make up a tidy list of scaffolding techniques that can be used in a training context. Scaffolding should be examined in terms of the potential to scaffold and the wider contextual support given for scaffolding. There is also an element of time. Although much of the research into classroom scaffolding focuses on specific talk happening at a specific time (Mercer 1995, 2000), scaffolding is not only an instant experience. It can take time, and the ensuing construction of knowledge may not be immediately visible.

6.4.2 Scaffolding techniques which can support

The data told a clear story of some positive scaffolding experiences. My trainees clarified this in their respondent validations, particularly with reference to questions asked. It was evident that different types of questions elicited a variety of responses and there are several issues to discuss surrounding the use of questions as a prompt for thinking and reflection.

Firstly, the interaction in input sessions as a whole-class was strongly Initiation, Response,

Feedback or Evaluation (IRF/E). Although this is considered ‘old-fashioned’, I believe that IRF/E can serve a pedagogic purpose for several reasons. It is a traditional and familiar classroom routine (Alexander 2004) and such questions can scaffold depending on how the trainer moves the trainee to the next level of reflection. The predictable structure of the interaction gives learners the opportunity to focus on the academic context of lessons, rather than the procedure. This is particularly important in a second language learning environment where the trainees have to focus on both form and content. Mercer (1995) reminds us that such IRF exchanges can restrict the learners’ contribution thus their construction of knowledge. However, a skillfully organized scheme of questioning uses IRF exchange as a foundation on which to build further knowledge. It is how the teacher or trainer structures such an exchange, by utilizing the various levels of scaffolding (see Figure 2) that is contingent scaffolding.

Secondly, recall questions also have the function of establishing a context and can prompt the learner to reflect on what they already know, so that the new information can be integrated more easily. ‘Cognitive development occurs through the accommodation of new ideas into one’s existing cognitive framework through social interaction’ (Bailey 2006, p.232).

Thirdly, speculative questions, which are characterized by ‘would’ and ‘could’ constructions, are at the top end of Bloom’s taxonomy of cognitive functions (1956), and encourage deeper thought processing and aid construction of knowledge (Myhill and Dunkin 2005, Hughes and Westgate 1998, Westgate and Hughes 1997). The ‘why’ questions and speculative questions prompt the trainee to think beyond the boundaries of time and actual teaching environment. Contrary to Fanselow’s (1988)’s concern that ‘why’ questions can be seen as confrontational, such questions supported structured reflection on practices. Such ‘interrupting’ or ‘obstructing’ can be seen as a vital way to push the trainee into new spheres of understanding. The questions act as a stimulus for articulation, thus thinking and reflection. ‘...an impediment or disturbance in an automatic activity make the author aware of this activity... speech is a process of becoming aware’ (Vygotsky 1986, p.30).

Such reflection on teaching, experience and knowledge are necessary steps for constructing knowledge of teaching. The assumption is that guiding questions which prompt reflection increase awareness which itself enables teachers to think about and change their behaviour.

6.4.3 Trainee-initiated interaction: questions and justification

Some trainees were fully comfortable with the feedback interaction and the functions. They took on a full role of participant, and asked questions and justified their actions. There is a call for students in classrooms to have more of such a role, an indicator of dialogic teaching (Alexander 2004, Mercer 1995, Westgate and Hughes 1997). This is clearly an area which requires more research. We need to find out why some trainees felt the confidence to do this, and others did not. Nyikos and Hashimoto (1997) draw the distinction between scaffolding and cognitive apprenticeship. In the former, they state that the responsibility lies with the teacher, the knower, whereas in the latter, the responsibility lies with the learner. I would disagree and argue that in scaffolding the teacher or knower is neither the 'rickshaw puller' nor the 'tram-driver' (Guk and Kellog 2007). In other words, a socio-cultural theory of scaffolding gives all parties in the discourse responsibility for being active participants and co-constructing knowledge. The teacher organises the environment, but in the dialogue, both participants are active makers of meaning. In a framework for teacher training which scaffolds, I would promote the activity of trainee questions and justifications to encourage deeper reflection (Marcos et.al. 2008).

6.4.4 Conclusions on micro-scaffolding

With reference to my first research question, based on the research and analysis of data, I suggest a theory of overlapping levels of micro-scaffolding. To contextualize such a theory, I shall firstly describe how the construct of ZPD is relevant, and I shall describe the central role of scaffolding artefacts such as documents.

Firstly, a principle of scaffolding in a learner's ZPD is that learners have different ZPDs, so although all these trainees are at the same point in their training, some are more able than others in terms of articulating their understanding of the lesson and feedback. A significant feature of scaffolding is not just questions, but the *specificity* of questions and prompts. Similar to Wood et al's (1976) principle of contingency and differing levels of assistance, it is the quality and specificity of the scaffolding at that moment in the interaction which supports the construction of knowledge, not the quantity. Woods et al. (1976) conclude in their early studies that the type of scaffolding depends on a particular tutee, with a particular task, at a particular time (p.97). Secondly, scaffolding is enhanced by referring to actual documents, that is, written documents. The trainees again can talk about their lessons in concrete terms, and can see the differences between what they planned, and what they did. By referring to the

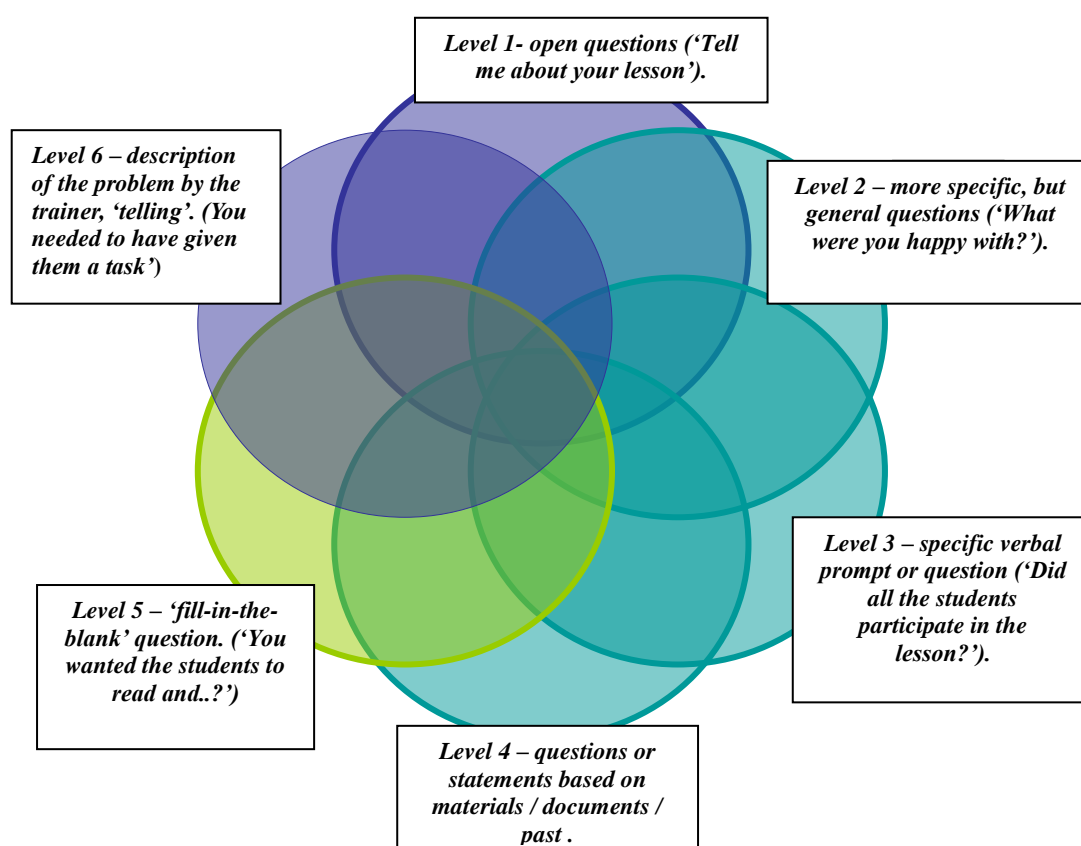
running commentary, trainees can see what they said or did, rather than what they *think* they said or did. Such practice can illuminate the difference between espoused practice (what the trainee thinks they do) and actual practice. By noticing the ‘gap’, conditions are set for further reflection and construction of teaching knowledge.

Thirdly, scaffolding is greatly enhanced by referring to concrete events rather than abstract events. Recalling what happened in the classroom leads the trainee to talk specifically about the activities and decisions made, and the trainee is more able to justify and suggest alternatives *themselves* rather than the trainer ‘telling’ them. This recall of events can be supported by the use of documents, a physical artefact, as well as a psychological one. The use of documents which can guide the scaffolding are reminiscent of Wertsch’s (1998) notion of the material nature of mediational means; their use, unanticipated results as well as their cultural representation. I will discuss below how certain documents as mediational means resulted in ‘spin-offs’.

What emerged was that some trainees were able to articulate their knowledge and reflection from general, open-ended prompts and some needed more specific prompting. In fact, what emerged was a hierarchy of prompting devices, or steps in specificity ranging from the least direct suggestion, i.e. describing, to the most direct technique which was telling. Such a framework is relevant in socio-cultural theory of learning as it recognizes that trainees or students have differing ZPDs. Trainees are at different levels of awareness and therefore need differing guidance and support.

6.4.5 Levels of micro-scaffolding

Figure 2: Overlapping levels of micro-scaffolding



Although the model is presented as a hierarchical concept, in fact these levels can overlap. Mercer (1985) states that '...a crucial, essential quality of "scaffolding" in all settings must be that it is the provision of guidance and support which is increased or withdrawn *in response to the developing competence of the learner*' (p.75, emphasis added). This points to the notion that ZPDs are not static and a trainee can move into a new ZPD in the course of an exchange, and certainly in the course of an activity. The trainer has to be sensitive to such a difference and change and make their choices of scaffolding level contingent on the response of the trainee. The model above is presented as a guideline for trainers to see what the possible scaffolding steps might be. It is very possible that for some topics in a feedback session or input session the trainee needs only level 1 scaffolding, but for another topic which requires more reflection, they need level 5. Thus such a model is flexible and overlaps, within an interaction and between interactions.

In summary, it would seem that scaffolding is indeed a sensitive form of help. At a linguistic level, talk which gave more potential for scaffolding in this context was different types of questions, telling, and trainee questions and justification. These talk characteristics all encouraged deeper reflection and cognitive processing of teaching concepts. Bliss et al (1996) remind us that the trainer's task is to simplify not the task, but the trainee's role in the task. This necessarily means different questions and prompts for trainees with differing ZPDs.

6.5 Contextual scaffolding conditions

In this section I shall discuss and answer my second research question which was:

Research question 2: What is the relationship between scaffolding talk and the Turkish teacher training context with Turkish speaking English teacher trainees?

At a micro-level, scaffolding can be examined in terms of its practice, technique or linguistic features. However, in terms of context, at a macro-practice level, scaffolding can be defined as conditions (see Figure 1). It is possible to examine and describe scaffolding as conditions which create potentials for micro-scaffolding to take place. Such scaffolding conditions included themes such as the competing discourses of ELT and the theme of theory and practice. In this section I will discuss the implications related to the contextual or macro-scaffolding of construction of knowledge and its relationship to micro-scaffolding.

6.5.1 Discourses of ELT training

The trainees were operating in a variety of ELT discourses. One which was prominent in their experience was the construct of 'good' teaching. Trainees were very aware of a dominant practice of doing and being in terms of 'the right way to teach'. This formed the basis of their evaluations, lesson planning, lesson execution and discussions on teaching. Another aspect of these ELT discourses was awareness of conventions of reflection and feedback in ELT. Some trainees understood the expectations of the feedback sessions, understood their own roles as that of reflective practitioner, and the trainer's role as a guide to reflection. Such awareness means that the trainer needs to understand the potential growth of the trainee's ZPD (Bailey 2006). It is important that both parties share expectations and have a mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities. These shared understandings and expectations created scaffolding conditions for the talk that goes on in the dialogue between the trainer and trainee.

Although there was clearly an unequal power relationship, I do not believe that this was an obstacle to the dialogue. As Bailey (2006) states ‘normally pre-service teachers put themselves into contexts where supervision is expected, if not welcomed. The trainees acknowledge that they have something to learn about teaching’ (p.226).

Even though trainees expected me to be the ‘expert’, they still understood their role of being an active participant, interacting and responding to the feedback. However, some trainees believed I was the ‘expert’ to the extent that they did not have an active role in the discourse. One reason for this is incongruent understanding of discourse of feedback and expectations. Some trainees did not understand the roles, expectations and even purpose of the feedback session. There were cases where the trainee did not realize that they were expected to reflect, discuss their lesson and think of alternatives. The trainees and I did not have the same agenda (Bliss et al. 1996). We were not ‘on the same page’ in these interactions and as a result scaffolding of knowledge did not happen. However, in cases where the trainee and I shared an understanding of the function of the feedback session and the discourse of feedback, there was scaffolding in the questions, responses, trainee questions and justifications.

It was also evident from the data that there is a need in a pre-service teacher training context for the trainees to be given some blue-prints for planning and teaching. As discussed in Chapter 2, this does not mean that the trainees are presented with one model only. In cognitive apprenticeship (Hockly 2000) the idea is that the trainees are presented with a variety of different blue prints, and as they work in schools and observe teachers, they are better able to choose the appropriate teaching ideas for their teaching style and the context they are teaching in. Modelling as a scaffold has been put forward by a variety of writers (Hockly 2000, Samaras and Gismondi 1998) and I believe that the trainees benefited a great deal from seeing a range of different models. In the context of this research, the modelling was done by a variety of participants. Firstly this was done by my colleagues and I as trainers and lecturers in the faculty. Secondly, by their school mentors with whom they worked closely over a 4-month period. Thirdly, they modelled for each other in the form of micro-teaching activities in the faculty classroom, in a safe environment for practising and discussion.

6.5.2 Theory and practice

The organization of the trainees' learning and the support systems in place for their practical

work are significant scaffolds for the construction of teaching knowledge, particularly procedural knowledge. Samaras and Gismondi (1998) write about the SCT tenets integral to pre-service teacher training, one of these being situated learning in authentic settings. This seemed to be a significant and very meaningful scaffold for my trainees. Samaras and Gismondi (ibid) state that being part of an actual classroom means that trainees can connect theory to practice: 'In a Vygotskian sense, the authentic setting lets them experience and *see* the concepts and theories, which they had only read about in textbooks' (ibid, p.723, italics in original). This is certainly the feeling that came through in many conversations I had with the trainees, and also in their comments in the school experience reflection paper. Situated learning also gives the trainees the opportunity to be part of the professional community through legitimate peripheral participation.

Within this theory and practice theme is the role of feedback in a general sense, and the role of the trainer. Here I refer to roles and functions of feedback and trainer at an organisational and contextual level, rather than the actual talk of the trainer. The trainees wrote about how useful they found feedback sessions after teaching practice. This seems stating the obvious, but how the feedback is given and organised is crucial to scaffolding. Trainees talked of the importance of the trainer not projecting their own opinion and asking questions to frame the discussion. They also talked about how the feedback sessions helped them to reflection.

There is considerable writing on feedback in a pre-service teacher training context, but I would like to discuss briefly within a socio-cultural framework the functions and features of this feedback. Samaras and Gismondi (1998) also reached the conclusion that the feedback was an important part of extending the trainees' ZPD through structured feedback and reflective assessments. However, this is an easy claim to make. How the feedback is conducted, how the prompts are given, and how the trainer takes into account his or her trainee's ZPD is crucial to appropriate feedback. Randall and Thornton (2001) state that 'The crucial role of the advisor is to identify the teacher's individual ZPD and to provide scaffolding for them to move forward and successfully internalise new ideas, concepts and skills' (p.52).

They go on to assert that:

'... one of the essential functions of the advisor during feedback sessions is not so much to provide 'solutions' to the teacher's problems (although this is an important

function) but to provide a framework for future development through the exercise of external dialogue which can provide a model for later internal, individualistic dialogue' (p.56).

This description of a trainer role is useful, but stops short of actually suggesting how trainers can go about this. From the data and my research, I would argue that significant features of this scaffolding feedback can be found in the shared understanding of roles and expectations, the shared understanding of functions of feedback sessions, and at the micro-level, the different types of prompts to reflection taking into account the trainee's ZPD.

To re-state then, scaffolding is a contextually-sensitive support for the construction of knowledge. I suggest a theory of scaffolding which takes into account both the micro-level interactions and the macro-conditions of scaffolding. It is important to remember that scaffolding at a level of interaction in terms of questions and prompts is only the potential to scaffold. These potentials need to be supported by the scaffolding conditions of the context, such as awareness and understanding of the discourses one is operating in. Scaffolding the construction of knowledge is not a neat and tidy exchange of question and answer. There are many opportunities for blocked and missed scaffolding, and such examples are also worthy of investigation. There is a strong link between the macro conditions for scaffolding and the potentials for scaffolding at the interactional level. I suggest that it is not possible to study one without the other. A comprehensive understanding of how scaffolding works in a teacher training context necessitates an awareness of the interaction between macro and micro-scaffolding. Cole (1985) argues that we cannot take the culture as given when studying cognition. This is clear from my data. The context of the learning creates the opportunities for learning: 'it is clear that the study of culture and cognition must incorporate the study of *both the systems of social relations and of internal (cognitive) activity*' (ibid, p.159, italics in original).

6.6 Personal learning points and recommendations for practice

Recommendations for practice emerged from my own personal learning points. My aims were to gain insights into trainer – trainee interaction that would inform my work, and perhaps inform others in similar second language training contexts. I strongly agree with Daniels (2001) who argues that one of the problems of describing and discussing pedagogic discourse is that its practices 'often remain tacit or ascribed to common sense' (p.6). Although my aim

was not one of action research and self-improvement, it is impossible for me not to have gained personal learning points about my work with the trainees, and more specifically, my interaction with them.

The recommendations I am making in this section require an understanding and awareness of the individual trainee, and the linguistic and contextual factors that influence learning. Such awareness is valid for both policy and planning-level decisions, as well as day-to-day decisions in the training room and moment-by-moment decisions made during interaction.

At a linguistic and interactional level, firstly, the trainer **has to be aware of the trainee's ZPD**. This may not be immediately observable. As a result, the trainer needs to have an **awareness of different scaffolding levels**, and flexibility in their use. The power of talk cannot be underestimated, and as the data have shown me, **language is a crucial mediator** in the construction of knowledge. The trainer should be aware of this and use language in a way that best prompts reflection and articulation of thoughts. Similarly, **trainees should be encouraged to interact**, initiate interaction and ask probing questions. Audio-recording and transcribing input and feedback sessions can give both the trainer and trainee valuable insights into the talk which takes place in the interaction. This may be a starting point for systematic monitoring of talk between trainer and trainee.

At a contextual level there need to be certain support systems in place. One is a **clear and explicit link between theory and practice**. This link needs to be articulated and referred to by all parties regularly. At policy, and planning stages of SLTE trainers can ensure that there are explicit links between the academic courses, and the teaching practices. This can be realised through assignments, projects, prompted reflection reports, and structured discussions. As can be seen from the data in this research, the learning conversation needs to be structured in some way to prompt deeper reflection.

There should also be an **explicit reference to the discourses of ELT** in terms of acceptable patterns and ways of teaching. This is the articulation of preferences by the trainer, and, to avoid the possible political and ethical concerns of vesting all discourse power in the trainer, the trainer can offer and elicit alternatives. The trainee should also be given explicit opportunities to reflect on and share preferences for teaching styles. There should also be

explicit discussion of roles and expectations of trainer and trainee within the learning framework, i.e. input sessions, feedback sessions. The trainer should also **recognise the place and role of feedback** and interaction with the trainees. One way of raising awareness of roles and expectations can be through open discussion of the purpose of feedback, expectations of both parties in the training experience, particularly feedback. Video observations of feedback sessions with all parties can highlight some of the issues raised in this thesis. Another powerful activity in understanding roles and discourses can be role-plays in which the trainee gives feedback to the trainer who plays the role of a teacher from a video of a lesson. The fact that the lesson was not taught by either party goes some way to reducing possible power tensions and loss of face.

6.7 Recommendations for further research

In this section I outline some areas which my data suggested as being possible further areas for focus and investigation. I also refer to the limitations outlined in 3.9 with a view to minimizing such limitations in further work on scaffolding. The main focus of this research was an exploration into scaffolding in a teacher training context and there were many stories evident in the data.

Firstly, in order to overcome several other limitations outlined in 3.9, further research into scaffolding from other trainers' work would be useful, and a collaborative research could be undertaken. This would minimize the subjectivity of this research, while engaging in dialogue with other trainers and gaining insights from other groups of trainees.

Secondly, studying scaffolding at the interactional and contextual level has been insightful into how trainees can construct teaching knowledge. In terms of pursuing some of the issues evident in the data, however, a further step would be to examine the relationship between scaffolding and actual classroom practice. Trainees' input on teaching knowledge has often been at a level of espoused knowledge, in terms of what teachers and trainees believe they do. It would seem that a focus on actual classroom practice would help trainers gain more of an insight into to what extent trainees are constructing knowledge from different scaffolding experiences. With training and teaching, the real test of the extent or uptake of teaching knowledge is actual teaching performance in the classroom. In a sense, research which focuses solely on talk about teaching tells us only half the story.

In this research context, the trainees were operating in a second language. Further research into the influence or effects of operating in a second language training context would be interesting and useful. In this research, the trainees had been studying in English for most of their school lives, and in English only for four years prior to their final year. They were also studying in an English-medium University. Most seemed comfortable operating in English. However, in several respondent validations, the trainees focused almost entirely on their use of English in the feedback sessions. They commented on mistakes they had made, and their use of vocabulary. I believe this concern with language could be an obstacle to scaffolding. It could be an obstacle in a linguistic sense in terms of understanding and comprehension, but also at an affective level, in terms of confidence. Similarly, further research into institutional discourse in a teacher training context and trainee uptake would be fruitful. I was particularly struck by one trainee who analyzed her entire feedback script and summarized the mistakes she had made. I believe this is telling of a concern of the trainees.

One further area of research could be at the organizational level of teacher training. The relationship between theory and practice was strongly evident in the data. More exploration in terms of how this relationship works in terms of scaffolding the construction of knowledge and how to maximize such potential for learning could be carried out. Such research would have far-reaching implications for both curriculum and policy in pre-service teacher training.

6.8 Conclusion to Chapter 6 and the thesis

This research has taken a step in the direction of describing scaffolding of construction of teaching knowledge in a teacher training context. Earlier research which conceptualizes differing levels of scaffolding (Daniels 2001, Hammond and Gibbons 2005) guided my thinking and analysis. However, neither framework emphasized scaffolding at talk level in terms of specific linguistic functions. Although Mercer's educational discourse (1995, 2000) and Alexander's dialogic teaching (2004) do in fact focus on specific teacher talk functions, they do not fully acknowledge the contextual level in scaffolding. Wood et al (1976) and Wood and Wood (1996) focus on the contingent nature of scaffolding and the varying levels of direct help within an interaction. This also framed my description of levels of micro-scaffolding. Documents acting as mediational means (Wertsch 1998) supported the

significant and crucial role of self-evaluation forms and running commentaries in a teacher training context.

My contribution to the study of scaffolding is to describe scaffolding across interactional and contextual levels, as well as within the interactional level. Scaffolding in a second language teacher training context is highly contingent on the trainee at a specific time and with a specific task. Similarly, the symbiotic nature of the contextual and interactional scaffolding cannot be ignored. This research has built on previous notions of scaffolding levels and scaffolding talk and contributed to the current literature with a data-driven framework for micro and macro-scaffolding, as well as a data-driven framework of scaffolding techniques and talk which are contingent on the task, the trainee, and the context. Any investigation of scaffolding needs to consider the wider context of the learners' learning environment. Scaffolding is a context-sensitive form of help and should be explored and practiced as such.

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Appendix A: Consent form

20th September 2008

Dear student

This is to request your participation in a research study to explore trainer and trainee interaction in a teacher training context. This will involve the following:

1. Videotaping 6-8 methodology sessions between October 2008 and May 2009.
2. Audio-recording 8-10 feedback sessions after teaching between October 2008 and May 2009.
3. My analysis of 10-15 self-evaluation forms from teaching.
4. Asking some questions about your interaction based on video tapes of sessions.
5. My analysis of my running commentaries from your teaching.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. The data, video tapes and audio recordings will be kept confidential. Only the researcher (me) will see the data, although I am willing to share any data collected with you at your request. Your name will not be used in any reports of this study.

One benefit from participating in the study is that you will contribute to the improvement of teacher training in Turkey, and you may learn about your own interaction from the data and video tapes. There are no risks, but participating may require some of your time if you are randomly selected to discuss the video tape of your interaction in class.

If you agree to consent, you are kindly requested to sign and return the informed consent form by Friday 26th September to either myself or Burcu Hanim.

Please sign and keep a copy of this form as an explanation of the study. If you have any questions please feel free to ask at any time. This research does not in any way affect your grades.

Marion Engin

Thank you again for your assistance in this project.

Sincerely,

_____ Date _____

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions outlined above.

_____ Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix B: Ammendum to consent letter

30th April 2009

Dear student

Thank you for your participation in my research so far. This is an addendum to the original consent form you signed in September 2008. I would like to make an additional request. I would like to include two of your assignments in my analysis:

1. Your School Experience II final reflection (December 2008)
2. A classroom management assignment: "To what extent has the reading you have done so far for this course affirmed what you previously believed (prior to September 2008) effective classroom management to be." (December 2008)

If you agree to consent, you are kindly requested to sign and return the informed consent form to me. You may keep a copy for yourself.

Sincerely,

Marion Engin

Thank you again for your assistance in this project.

30th April 2009

Dear student

Thank you for your participation in my research so far. This is an addendum to the original consent form you signed in September 2008. I would like to make an additional request. I would like to include two of your assignments in my analysis:

1. Your School Experience II final reflection (December 2008)
2. A classroom management assignment: "To what extent has the reading you have done so far for this course affirmed what you previously believed (prior to September 2008) effective classroom management to be." (December 2008)

If you agree to consent, you are kindly requested to sign and return the informed consent form to me. You may keep a copy for yourself.

Marion Engin

Thank you again for your assistance in this project.

Sincerely,

I agree to allow access to the two assignments described above for analysis.

Signature _____ Date

Appendix C: Permission letter to Director, Graduate School of Education

10th September 2008

Dear Margaret

This is a formal request to carry out research in our Department and with my ETE students.

As you know I would like to start collecting data this semester and next semester for my Ed.D thesis. I plan to use some of the current ETE 5th year students as participants in my Methods II course and my SE II course. Attached to this letter are the following documents:

1. My research proposal that I sent to Bath with input from my supervisor.
2. Ethical considerations.
3. A rough timetable of activities which will involve my faculty work for this semester.

I would like to stress that although the research will involve my students, and will be collected during some of my classes and feedback sessions, this will in no way impede on my work for the Faculty and my role of trainer for my students. The quality of my teaching and feedback will also not be affected in any way. If anything, I hope to learn from my research and develop myself as a trainer.

I would appreciate your considering this request and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Marion

Ethical considerations

1. I will ensure that I have written informed consent from my Faculty and University.
2. There will be anonymity for the participants throughout.
3. All procedures will be explained to the participants beforehand.
4. Participants will be asked to sign consent form with the proviso that they may opt out of the research at any time.

Appendix D: Self-evaluation form

Bilkent University
Graduate School of Education
Lesson evaluation by student-teacher

Date:		Class:		Lesson:	
What I planned: (brief summary)					
My first response: (How do I feel about the lesson? What went well? What didn't? How do I know?)					
Achievement of student learning / objectives: (Did students learn what I intended? How do I know? What do I know about the learning of individuals? What were the reasons for the students not achieving? How effective was my assessment?)					
Evaluation of what I planned: (Did I achieve what I wanted to achieve? How do I know? If so, why? If not, why not? What will I do to improve?)					
Summary: (What I have learned? What would I do differently? What would I do again?)					
Targets: (Write 1 – 3 clear targets for next lesson with this group)					

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APPENDIX E: Running commentary sheet used by trainers
Bilkent University Graduate School of Education

TEACHER:

DATE:

OBSERVER:

NUMBER OF STS:

LEVEL OF CLASS:

TIME:

MAIN AIMS OF LESSON:

STAGE OF LESSON/DESCRIPTION	TIME	COMMENTS / QUESTIONS

Appendix F: Summary sheet

Bilkent University Graduate School of Education TP Summary Sheet

TEACHER:

STRONG POINTS:

POINTS TO THINK ABOUT

OTHER COMMENTS:

TUTOR:

Appendix Ga: School Experience Assignment question
Bilkent University
Graduate School of Education

School Experience II

Final Assignment: Reflection on School Experience II

Give to your supervisor before or on
You should give in your **School Experience II file** at the same time

Write an essay of about 1500 words on your work in schools this academic year. The essay should consist of two sections:

Section 1 A **synthesis** of what you have observed about the five schools you have worked in since September. Include all the schools you have worked in (ÖBL, ÖBİ, BUPS, TED, Robert College, ACI). (Do **not** write about each school separately).

In your answer you should include and discuss

- teaching methods (3)
- students (3)
- facilities and resources (3)
- school ethos (3)

12

Section 2 A **reflection** on your progress as a teacher

Take stock of yourself and your teaching abilities. Compare where you started in September with where you are now. Go back and re-read your lesson observations. Then write an account of how you think you have changed under three headings, bearing in mind the GSE's educational philosophy.

- In what areas have you made progress? (3)
- What were the most useful learning experiences? (3)
- What do you think you still have to learn? (2)

8

Scoring criteria 25 % of grade for School Experience II

1. Content (20)

- Content in addressing the questions above, to show understanding of key elements in schools
- Focused on topic, specific and relevant examples
- Depth of reflection and elaborations of points

2. Organization (3)

- Clear beginning, development and conclusion
- Flow of ideas: logical and coherent presentation, progression of related points

3. Language accuracy and use (2)

- Effective and clear communication
- Vocabulary and sentence structure
- Accuracy, including spell check

Appendix Gb: Classroom Management course assignment question (December 2009):

To what extent has the reading you have done so far for this course affirmed what you previously believed (prior to September 2008) effective classroom management to be?

Appendix H: Data references

DATA SUMMARY

I Input sessions in University classroom

Code	Date
IS 1	15.10.08
IS 2	3.12.08

II Feedback sessions

Code	Date	Trainee
FS 1	5.11.08	G
FS 2	4.11.08	R
FS 3	16.12.08	A
FS 4	25.11.08	N
FS 5	25.11.08	Z
FS 6	16.12.08	El
FS 7	18.11.08	O
FS 8	4.11.08	C
FS 9	4.11.08	E
FS 10	4.11.08	Og
FS 11	5.3.09	N
FS 12	24.2.09	Oz

III Interviews with colleagues

Code	Date	Interviewee
Int 1	15.01.09	N
Int 2	16.01.09	D

IV Written reflection assignments, part of School Experience course (January 2009).

Code	Trainee
Ass. 1	C
Ass. 2	M
Ass. 3	Og
Ass.4	D

V. Respondent feedback (May 2009)

Code	Trainee
RF 1	D
RF 2	M
RF 3	Z
RF 4	N
RF 5	O
RF 6	E
RF 7	Og
RF 8	G

VI Self-evaluation reports

	Trainee	Date
SE 1	G	4.11.09
SE 2	E	4.11.08
SE 3	Og	4.11.08
SE 4	A	11.3.09
SE 5	Oz	24.2.09

Appendix I

TP Assessment Criteria

Competences	
KNOWLEDGE OF SUBJECT AREA & SUBJECT AREA TEACHING	1. 1. Knowledge of the subject area 1. 2. Knowledge of subject area teaching
TEACHING & LEARNING PROCESS Planning	2.1. Assessing students' prior knowledge 2.2. Aware of common misunderstandings 2.3 Writing focused, integrated and challenging lessons with clear objectives 2.4. Selecting relevant and contemporary methods and techniques 2.5. Selecting and preparing appropriate and challenging materials, including AV
Teaching process	2.6. Using methods and techniques appropriately 2.7. Using time effectively 2.8. Setting up meaningful and focused tasks and activities with effective transitions 2.9. Involving all students, incorporating a variety of interaction patterns 2.10. Catering for varying needs of students; making alterations as necessary during the lesson 2.11. Using materials, technology and audio-visual aids appropriately and effectively 2.12. Checking student learning/progress and giving appropriate feedback (formative assessment) 2.13. Monitoring student work 2.14. Creating opportunities for practice and production 2.15. Relating the topic to real life 2.16. Meeting the objectives of the lesson
Classroom management	2.17. Confidence 2.18. Gaining attention and maintaining interest with an appropriate introduction 2.19. Establishing routines (classroom rules, sanctions, preventing disruptions) 2.20. Building a positive relationship with students, and accepting and valuing them; 2.21. Giving praise/encouragement as necessary 2.22. Providing a democratic teaching environment 2.23. Taking necessary actions for learner safety 2.24. Giving a sense of closure 2.25. Planning follow-up (e.g. homework; next lesson)
Communication	2.26 Communicating with students effectively, showing interest in students 2.27. Presenting concepts/content clearly; using clear language 2.28. Asking questions effectively 2.29. Giving clear and staged instructions 2.30. Using voice effectively 2.31. Using body language effectively 2.32. Evaluating student work and giving written feedback 2.33. Keeping records
EVALUATION OF SELF AND RECORDING	3.1. Keeping comprehensive records of TP activities class by class (lesson observation forms, lesson plans, materials, reflection, feedback from mentors and supervisor(s), mentor meeting forms]
OTHER PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES Attitude and commitment	4.1. Positive attitude 4.2. Following professional code of conduct 4.3. Openness to professional feedback 4.4. Professional relationship with the supervisor, peers, the mentor, the department, the school; 4.5. Participating in school meetings and activities; assisting as necessary 4.6. Punctuality 4.7. Reflecting on own performance & setting personal objectives to further develop knowledge and skills

KOÇ, S., ERGEZEN, S., AYAS, A., BAKI, A., ÇEPNİ, S., KINCAL, R., 1998. *Faculty-school partnership and school experience*. Ankara, Turkey: YÖK / WORLD BANK: 105.

